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Filson Club Publications

Number One

The Life and Writings

OF

John Filson

THE

First Historian of Kentucky

By

Reuben T. Durrett

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JOHN FILSON

FROM A MINIATURE IN AN OLD BOOK THAT ONCE BELONGED TO HIM,
NOW IN POSSESSION OF REUBEN T. DURRETT, OF LOUISVILLE, KY.

Filson Club - Louisville, Ky., 1884.

JOHN FILSON,

The First Historian of Kentucky.

AN ACCOUNT OF

HIS LIFE AND WRITINGS,

Principally from Original Sources.

PREPARED FOR THE

FILSON CLUB

AND READ AT ITS MEETING, IN LOUISVILLE, KY., JUNE 26, 1884, BY

REUBEN T. DURRETT,

PRESIDENT OF THE CLUB.

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PREFACE.



ON the 15th of May, 1884, RICHARD H. COLLINS, WILLIAM CHENAULT, JOHN MASON BROWN, BASIL W. DUKE, GEORGE M. DAVIE, JAMES S. PIRTLE, THOMAS W. BULLITT, ALEXANDER P. HUMPHREY, THOMAS SPEED, and REUBEN T. DURRETT organized the FILSON CLUB, in Louisville, Ky., for the purpose of collecting and preserving the history of Kentucky, and especially those perishing scraps of history and biography which have never been published. The organization limited its membership to persons known to take an interest in historic studies and to be capable of so arranging and presenting the information they may obtain as to be useful to others. The Club was named in remembrance of John Filson, the first historian of Kentucky, and Mr. Durrett, who was made its President, was requested to prepare and read at its next meeting an account of the life and writings of the author whose name had been assumed. This request was complied with, and the article so prepared and read at the meeting, June 26, 1884, elaborated with an appendix and embellished with a likeness of Filson, a specimen of his chirography, and his map of Kentucky, is here published as the first contribution of the Filson Club to the historic literature of the State.

THOMAS SPEED, *Secretary*

LOUISVILLE, KY., June 26, 1884




JOHN FILSON,

THE FIRST HISTORIAN OF KENTUCKY.



The Little Known about Filson.

 NE hundred years have now elapsed since John Filson published what has been regarded as the first history of Kentucky, and indeed the first, in English, of any portion of our vast domain west of the Alleghany Mountains. During this long period all that has been made known concerning this author and his work might be told in an ordinary paragraph. Volumes have been published about Daniel Boone, the hunter and Indian-fighter, but scarcely a page concerning Filson—his first biographer—who did more than any one else to make the name of Boone immortal. Beginning with the first published notice of Filson, written for the Cincinnati Directory of 1819, probably by Nathan Guilford, all that is there told concerning him is that he bargained, in 1788, with Denman and Patterson, for one-third of the ground on

which Cincinnati was afterward built, projected a town on the site by the name of Losantiville, and made an excursion into the country in which he was killed by the Indians. To this brief account Burnet's Letters, published by the Ohio Historical Society in 1839, added that Filson had been a surveyor, and Perkins' Annals of the West, in 1846, that he had been a school-master. Nothing further was contributed by any author with whom I am familiar until Ranck, in his History of Lexington, in 1872, added that he was teaching school there in 1782, writing the narrative of Boone soon after the battle of the Blue Licks, and exerting himself in behalf of the Transylvania Seminary in 1788. The few facts concerning Filson, thus scattered through different publications, were gathered together by Richard H. Collins in his History of Kentucky, in 1874, with additional particulars about the time and place of his death and the republications of his book in Paris and London, the whole presented in the first form of a narrative or biographical sketch that had been attempted.

Kentuckians who take an interest in the history of their State can hardly rest satisfied with such a meager account of their first historian and author; and especially must this be true with the members of the Club which has assumed the name of Filson, and which was organized for the purpose of collecting and preserving the history

of the State, particularly the fragmentary and perishing parts thereof. In response, therefore, to the desire of the Filson Club, that the first contribution to its archives should be more knowledge of the author whose name it bears, I have collected and herewith commit to its keeping, in addition to what has been previously published, such information concerning him and his writings as I have been able to gather from the words of some who knew him in life and others who knew of him, and from public records and private papers yet spared by time.

The Grandfather of Filson.

Among the English-speaking families who succeeded the Swedes and the Dutch in the rich valley of the beautiful Brandywine, a small stream in Southeastern Pennsylvania, made famous by the victory of General Howe over General Washington in the early stages of the American Revolution, were the Filsons. Here John Filson, the grandfather of the historian, on his little farm of two hundred acres, in the township of East Fallowfield, died in 1751. In accordance with the law of primogeniture, then in force in the colonies, he bequeathed his lands to his oldest son, Davison, to the exclusion of his younger sons and daughters.

The Father of Filson.

Davison Filson, the father of the historian, was a thrifty farmer, and added to the number of acres he had inherited. At his death, in 1776, he left money in his purse, debts against his neighbors, grain in his barn, crops growing in his fields, and stock running upon his pastures. Before his death he deeded to his sons, John and Robert, the lands he intended them to have, and by will provided for his six other children. Independent of his lands, his personal property was valued by the appraisers appointed by the court at about £300, which, though insignificant in comparison with some of the Virginia estates on the James, was quite a sum for an humble farmer on the Brandywine.

The Birth of the Historian.

John Filson, the historian, the second son of Davison Filson, was born and raised on the Brandywine farm; but no record has been found to fix the exact date of his birth. In the ninth volume of the second series of the Pennsylvania Archives the marriage of Davison Filson to Agnes Boggs is given, in the First Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia, as of the date of February 9, 1768. John

Filson, the historian, could hardly have been born of this marriage, if the date is rightly given. It would make him at most only about eight years old when he received deeds from his father for lands, and not to exceed sixteen when he published his history of Kentucky. Either the date is wrongly given, or the historian came of a previous marriage. In the will of John Filson, the grandfather of the historian, which bears the date of September 3, 1748, a grandson named John is mentioned, and to him bequeathed a Bible. This grandson was probably John Filson, the historian, and if so, his birth can not be fixed earlier than 1747. Some books known to have belonged to the historian, and now in my possession, have the signature of John Filson on the seventeenth and forty-seventh pages. It has been the habit of some owners of books to write their names upon particular pages, the figures of which indicate the date of purchase, others the time of the owner's arriving at the age of twenty-one, etc. It was, possibly, the peculiarity of Filson to write his name on two separate pages, the figures of which, when joined together, would represent the year of his birth. Thus 17 and 47, when brought together, made 1747 as the year of his birth, which, though entirely conjectural, is not inconsistent with the will of his grandfather.

His Early Life on the Brandywine.

Previous to his coming to Kentucky, at the probable age of six and thirty, but little is known of Filson. Through some of the Kentucky pioneers with whom he was thrown after coming to this region, something has come down in tradition concerning his early life in Pennsylvania. The son and grandson of humble farmers in the valley of the Brandywine, he passed his childhood, his youth and his early manhood in the pursuits common to the agriculturists of his neighborhood. He plowed the ground, cultivated the crop, harvested the grain, mowed the meadow, and rode to mill on the bag of corn to be ground into meal, as did other boys. In 1784, when Isaac Hite was erecting his mill on Goose Creek, above Louisville, Filson was present, and told the following anecdote on himself, which the late Abram Hite used to repeat as a souvenir of what the boys did in early times: On one occasion, while on his way to mill on the Brandywine, Filson avoided the usual ford for the purpose of seeing new sights, and attempted to cross the water at another point where the depth was unknown. When near the middle of the stream his horse suddenly plunged into water too deep to be waded, and had to swim for the shore. The bag of corn left the back of

the horse as the water rose over it, and was lost in the current. Filson, however, held fast to the mane of the horse, and, dangling his legs on the surface like streamers from a masthead, was safely borne to the shore. The loss of the bag of grain he found somewhat serious, when he returned to the empty meal-barrel at home with nothing to make the family hoe-cake. However, the children were put on short rations until the next day, when another bag was sent to mill. It was not sent by John this time, however, but by his brother Robert, while John engaged in the more disagreeable work of hoeing the corn in the field.

His Education.

In addition to the neighborhood schools of the valley of the Brandywine, Filson is said to have had the advantage of some instruction from Rev. Samuel Finley, who once had an academy in that vicinity, and afterward became President of New Jersey College. The writings of Filson, though occasionally marred by serious faults of composition, indicate that he was taught at school something more than simple reading, writing, and arithmetic. He is credited with having composed the word Losantiville, the name first given to the present city of Cincinnati. This name, being made up of the initial letter L,

for Licking, the Latin word *os* meaning mouth, the Greek *anti* meaning opposite to, and the French *ville*, meaning city—all, together, signifying the city opposite the mouth of Licking—indicates that he had some knowledge of the Greek, Latin, and French languages. He is known to have understood the French language, and to have used it to advantage in his intercourse with the French in the Illinois country. He also proposed to teach French in a school that he projected at Lexington, Kentucky, in 1788.

His Want of a Military Record.

What part, if any, Filson took in the great struggle for American independence is not known. No military epithet seems to have been attached to his name. On the rolls of none of the companies engaged in the colonial or revolutionary wars has his name been found. The name of Samuel Filson appears as a private in the company of Captain Bond, in 1759. Robert Filson was a lieutenant in the corps of six hundred and fifty-two volunteers called for by the Committee of Safety in 1776. George Filson, a private in Captain Wilson's company, was wounded at the battle of Trenton, and Thomas Filson was a sergeant in Captain Semple's company in 1780. The Filsons do not seem, therefore, to have been of the

non-combatant class, and yet we fail to find the name of the historian on the company lists of his day. It is possible that he may have been engaged in teaching school, and in this useful vocation was released from the necessity which called others into the field. He was a surveyor also, and in the patriotic use of the ferule and compass may have reposed in comparative quiet from the throes of the tremendous military struggle around him.

He Leaves Pennsylvania for Kentucky.

If, however, his occupation gave him rest and immunity during the revolutionary war, he was destined to six short years of activity and danger when that struggle ended. Scarcely had the thunders of the revolutionary guns been silenced, when, borne upon the tide of land speculation which was sweeping from all directions toward Kentucky, he made his way from the Brandywine to the Elkhorn, in the midst of what he justly described as "the most extraordinary country upon which the sun had ever shone." Over the mountains from Chester to Pittsburgh, and down the Ohio to Limestone, and through the dark forests to Lexington, he made his way with the enthusiasm of the adventurer who stops not at difficulties or dangers in his path to the new "land of promise."

His Arribal in Kentucky, and Entries of Land.

The date of Filson's first arrival in Kentucky is not known with precision. Mr. Ranck, in his history of Lexington, has him teaching school in that place in 1782, and writing the adventures of Daniel Boone after the return of the old pioneer from the Chillicothe expedition, in the fall of that year. The first recorded evidence of his presence in Kentucky was his entry of lands a year later. On the 19th of December, 1783, he entered in the books of Colonel Thomas Marshall, then surveyor of Fayette County, two tracts of land, one for 4,922 and the other for 5,000 acres, and on the following day another tract of 2,446½ acres. These entries were made on treasury warrants assigned to Filson by Clem Möore and John Boyd, and the 12,368½ acres thus obtained, in the aggregate had not probably cost the locator more than that number of cents. Virginia had offered her public lands for the paper money she had put in circulation during the revolutionary war, and long before Filson came to Kentucky to locate these lands, this currency had depreciated as a thousand of paper for one of silver. Besides these twelve thousand and odd acres in Fayette, Filson had 1,500 acres in Jefferson County, which he had purchased of Squire Boone, and other possessions in the Illinois country which I have not been able to ascertain on account of the burning of the records at Vincennes in 1814.

His First Thought of a History of Kentucky.

It is probable that Filson came to Kentucky for the purpose of acquiring lands on warrants brought with him. When he once got here and examined the rich country and mingled with the hospitable pioneers and saw the tide of immigration constantly flowing in from all quarters, he shrewdly enough foresaw a great country here in the future, and concluded to write a book and draw a map that might help to people it more rapidly. He, himself, in his preface to his work, says that he published it "solely to inform the world of the happy climate and plentiful soil of this favoured region." Filson, however, could not have been ignorant of the fact that his own lands, as well as others, would be increased in value in proportion to the number of immigrants that his book might draw to this region.

How He Gathered Information for His Book and Map.

Although the year 1783 was not entirely free from Indian depredations, the terrible damages they had received in their own homes beyond the Ohio, the year previous, at the hands of General Clark, rendered them comparatively harmless. Filson had access enough to

such pioneers as Daniel Boone, Levi Todd, James Harrod, Christopher Greenup, John Cowan, and William Kennedy, all of whom he mentions with gratitude, to gather the needed information for his book, and could go over the country to make surveys and observations for his map without the dangers that beset the forest in previous and subsequent years. He has come down through tradition as exceedingly persistent in his searches for information, so much so that it was understood among the pioneers that the only way to get rid of his inquiries was to answer them. The proverb was, he could ask more questions than everybody and answer fewer than anybody.

His Book and Map Published at Different Places.

In 1784 his work was ready for publication. There was then no printing press west of the Alleghany Mountains, and the author had to make his way up the Ohio to Pittsburgh, and across the mountains to Philadelphia and Wilmington, to find publishers. He took the manuscript of his book to Wilmington, in the State of Delaware, where it was printed by James Adams. The drawing of his map was taken to Philadelphia, where it was engraved by H. D. Pursell and printed by T. Rook. Both the map and the book bear the date 1784, and have now reached the venerable age of an hundred years.

Characteristics of Filson's Map.

This map by Filson was the first ever made of Kentucky, and forms an important part of his history. It was a vast improvement upon the general maps of Charlevoix, Evans, Hutchins, Pownall, and others, which had preceded it and given a very inadequate idea of the country on the Ohio River. It presented the three counties of Jefferson, Fayette and Lincoln, into which the district of Kentucky was then divided, and gave the topography of the country—its rivers and creeks, its mountains and hills, its prairies and canebrakes, its barrens and forests, its mineral, salt and medical springs, and other characteristics, with wonderful accuracy for the early period at which the work was done. The only towns then in the district were Louisville and Bardstown in Jefferson County; Harrodsburg, Boonesborough, and Danville in Lincoln, and Lexington, Leestown, and Greenville in Fayette, all of which are laid down in their proper places. The two last named have long since disappeared and passed from the memory of the living. They are placed, by this map, on the north side of the Kentucky River, a short distance below where Frankfort now stands. Leestown was an important resort for the hunters and improvers north of the Kentucky River;

and the main road from Louisville to Lexington passed through it about a mile below Frankfort. This road had been originally made by the buffaloes, and crossed the Kentucky River at one of the few places along its extended course where it was practicable to make the passage. A striking feature of this map is the number of forts laid down upon it and indicating the circumscribed life of the pioneers. In the triangular space bounded by a line drawn from the Falls of the Ohio to the great bend of the Licking, in which the battle of the Blue Licks was fought, thence southwardly, through Boonesborough to the old English station toward the head waters of Dick's River, and thence through Bardstown and back to Louisville, more than fifty fortifications are exhibited. In these forts the thirty thousand inhabitants of Kentucky were then shut up, something like cattle in pens, for protection against the wily savage. There was no going out from the pickets which surrounded these block-houses during what was called the Indian season without danger. The crop was cultivated within range of the rifles of the fort, some keeping guard while others hoed the corn and weeded the vegetables. The roads, first made by the buffaloes and adopted by the pioneers, are laid down with such accuracy that the position of the old historic places may be ascertained at

this distant day by measurements from known objects whose positions have not changed. On the old roads leading out from Louisville to Lexington and to Bardstown are the fortified stations known by the names of Spring, Floyd, Low Dutch, Sturgis, Linn, Sullivan, and Boone, just where they stood an hundred years ago, with a scale on the map to show how far they were from the Falls and the distances of one from the other. On this map, too, are located the few dwelling houses of our pioneers that stood outside of the pickets of the forts. The Hite house in Jefferson, the Marshall, the Wilkinson, the Todd, the Johnson, and the Boone in Fayette, each appears in its proper place and may now be traced to its location by the descendants of the historic characters who occupied it in 1784. Between Salt and Green rivers is laid down that mysterious formation which our forefathers called the Barrens, because they found it without the forest trees which covered other portions of the country. To the east appeared the warriors' path leading from Cumberland Gap to the Shawnee town at the mouth of the Scioto, and a little southeast of it the trace that Boone marked out for the adventurers of Transylvania in 1775. That wonderful bend of the Ohio opposite to the Great Miami, in which the huge bones of the mastodon were found, and that

no less striking curve of the Licking, in which the battle of the Blue Licks was fought, may be examined as specimens of the accuracy with which the rivers are laid down. Take it all together, this map of the District of Kentucky in 1784 was a masterly work to have been produced more from conversations with the pioneers than from the use of the compass and chain. In this day of triangulation, etc., for charts, it is incomprehensible how such men as Boone and Todd and Harrod could take a hunt up and down a long river and then give such an account of it as to enable a surveyor to lay it down upon paper with its windings and peculiarities so as to distinguish it from all other streams and give it a fixed place in the geographical knowledge of the country. This, however, was done, and done so well that the subsequent maps of Kentucky by Barker, Imlay, Crevœur and others have been but little more than reproductions of Filson's map with the additional counties and towns established since it was made. The early history of the State of Kentucky can not be properly understood without this map, and it must forever remain the best authority for the topography of the State one hundred years ago.

Filson knew well enough that his map of Kentucky was an excellent work, far in advance of anything of

the kind previously attempted. He was proud of it and dedicated it to the Congress of the United States and to General Washington. In the just pride of his accomplishment, however, he did not forget those who had given him their aid in the good work. At the top of his map he drew a scroll, and in it placed the following inscription:

While this work shall live let this inscription remain a monument of the gratitude of the author to Col's Dan'l Boone, Levi Todd, and Jas. Harrod; Capt. Christ. Greenup, Jno. Cowan, and Wm. Kennedy, Esq's, of Kentucke, for the distinguished assistance with which they have honored him in its composition, and a testimony that it has received the approbation of those whom he justly esteems the best qualified to judge of its merit.

Filson's Associates and Helpers.

The names thus presented on the scroll of Filson show us the kind of men with whom he associated when he came to Kentucky, and indicate the sources of the information which made up his book and his map. Daniel Boone, Levi Todd, James Harrod, Christopher Greenup, John Cowan, and William Kennedy are the six who make up the roll of honor. They were among the earliest and most efficient of those who laid the foundation of our Commonwealth. They were soldiers, statesmen, citizens, fathers, neighbors, and friends peculiarly suited to the conditions in which their

lot was cast. Boone appears first on the list, as well he might, for he was the first of them to see the fair land of Kentucky, and, like another Adam in the garden of Eden, to give names to the waters and lands which spread out in their wild majesty before him. Levi Todd, the cultured pioneer whose careful habits and beautiful chirography made him the first clerk of the first court ever held in Kentucky and afterward first clerk of the county of Fayette, appears second on Filson's list. Filson spent considerable of his time at the house of Todd, near Lexington, and there did much of his writing and drawing for his book and map. He next mentions the name of James Harrod, after whom Harrodsburg, claimed to be the first settlement in Kentucky, was named. Harrod was a woodsman almost as famous as Boone, and remembered the country so well as he saw it that the information he imparted was well suited for the purposes of Filson. He had one of those kind and generous hearts, moreover, that never grew weary of the inquiries made of him for what he knew. Like Filson, Harrod mysteriously disappeared from the circle of the living while exploring the wild woods, and no one knows the manner of his death beyond the conjecture that he fell at the hands of one who enticed him into the wilderness ostensibly to show him the mystic silver mine of Swift, but in reality to murder

him. Christopher Greenup is next mentioned by Filson, who, although fourth on the list, afterward became the most renowned of them all. He first became clerk of the District Court of Kentucky; next a member of Congress; then clerk of the Senate, and finally Governor of the State. Filson next mentions John Cowan, who antedates them all, except Boone, in his coming to Kentucky. Cowan was among the first surveyors at the Falls of the Ohio, in 1773, and saw Captain Bullitt run the lines of the Connelly tract, on which the great city of Louisville was afterward built. He then selected for himself a tract of land on the Ohio opposite to Twelve-Mile Island, above Louisville, where he reared a cabin and raised a crop of corn the following year. In spite of all his toils about Harrodsburg and other places, he claimed this land in Jefferson County as his settlement in Kentucky, and secured four hundred acres for this right, with a pre-emption of another thousand adjoining. He was a woodsman, scarcely inferior to Boone or Harrod, and had a memory from which nothing escaped that he had ever seen or heard. In the autumn of life he was a frequenter of the place of my birth and early years, where he told again and again his stories of pioneer life to willing listeners who forgot them not but repeated them and sent them on their way to our times. Some of these stories con-

cerned Filson, and have been embodied in this article. Lastly, the name of William Kennedy appears in the list of Filson. Kennedy was a member of the second and third conventions which met at Danville, in 1785 and 1787, for the purpose of separating Kentucky from Virginia, and when the new State was erected was one of the electors from Mercer County for choosing senators under the first constitution. He was one of the earliest comers to Kentucky, and a woodsman of marvelous tact and prudence. With such men as these to impart information, we need not wonder that Filson should have made such a map of Kentucky as he produced in 1784. There was scarcely a river or creek in the whole district along which one or more of them had not been hunting or exploring, and when the individual information of each was combined into a whole, Filson had a knowledge of the country both vast and reliable. Hence, a map was produced that was the wonder of the day, and that must forever remain the only picture of our State an hundred years ago. It is the map not only of Filson, the accomplished surveyor and cartographer, but of Boone and Todd and Harrod and Greenup and Cowan and Kennedy, the best informed pioneer woodsmen of their day.

Bibliographic Error about Filson's Map.

Quite a dispute arose some years ago as to whether a map of Kentucky accompanied the original history of Filson. The exceeding great rarity of the map and its repeated absence from the few copies of the book that got into the hands of sellers induced them to account for its want by asserting that it had never existed. This, too, in the face of the statement more than once made in the book itself, that it was accompanied by a map, and in spite of the equally emphatic announcement of Parraud, in the French edition of 1785, that he had translated the map as well as the book. When Geo. A. Leavitt & Co., of New York, sold the Murphy copy last March they followed the example of their predecessors and boldly made the following announcement in their catalogue: "It is proper to state that although the title calls for a map, none appears to have been published; when found it is usually supplied from the French translation." This was too grave an error to have been committed by parties professing such superior knowledge of the books they offered as to herald them with an elaborate descriptive catalogue. If they had simply said the book they offered for sale had not the map and they could not account for its absence, it

would have been well enough; but to presume to say the map was never published was going decidedly too far for truth. In 1882, when Col. John Mason Brown delivered his centennial address in commemoration of the battle of the Blue Licks, it was his wish to have the oration, when published, accompanied by a *fac-simile* of the original map of Kentucky by Filson. He attempted to find an original from which a copy could be obtained, with the following result published in a note to the pamphlet containing his oration:

The original edition of Filson's work was published at Wilmington in 1784, with a certificate under the hands of Daniel Boone, Levi Todd, and James Harrod. It also purported to contain a "Map of Kentucke."

It is strange that no copy of the edition of 1784 can be found containing the map referred to, though very diligent search has been made. I have to thank Mr. A. R. Spofford, Librarian of the Congressional Library at Washington, Mr. Lloyd P. Smith, of the Philadelphia Public Library, Mr. James L. Whitney, of the Boston Public Library, Mr. Lyman C. Draper, the veteran collector and historical writer, and Robert Clarke, Esq., of Cincinnati, for their kindness in searching out this matter.

The better opinion seems to be that Filson did not publish his map with his book, but made it public afterward. It is hardly possible otherwise to account for the absence of the map from every known copy of the edition of 1784.

Yet, on the other hand, Reuben T. Durrett, Esq., of Louisville, Kentucky, is very positive in his recollection that the map referred to was in the copy of Filson which he presented to the Public Library of Louisville, Kentucky, and which has since been stolen.

The high authorities thus arrayed against the map in the note of Colonel Brown's pamphlet had not, like Leavitt & Co., denied the existence of the map, but had suggested its publication at a time different from the book. In this they were mistaken, because the book and map both appeared in 1784; but the whole dispute was calculated to produce the impression that I had been mistaken in the statement that I had a book and map together. I myself knew that I could not be mistaken, because I had made copious notes from my map before giving it to the Public Library, and those very notes furnished the information which I have used in this article concerning this map. The weight of evidence forming the "better opinion," as Colonel Brown's note expressed it, was against me, however, and I determined to find one of these maps if it could be done. I had understood that William M. Darlington, Esq., of Pittsburgh, had one, and I wrote to him about it but got no answer. Finally, I examined an old catalogue which I had of the maps in the library of Harvard University, published in 1831, and there found, on page 199, such a description of the map in question as to leave no doubt that it was the one I wanted. I communicated my discovery to Colonel Brown, who was personally acquainted with Justin Winsor, Esq., the accomplished

librarian, to whom he wrote about the map. Mr. Winsor promptly answered that the map was there. I then determined to place myself right about its existence by securing a *fac-simile* copy to accompany this article. Mr. Winsor accommodatingly placed the original in the hands of the Heliotype Printing Company, of Boston, who have furnished the photo-lithographic reproduction which here vindicates me and resurrects the buried work. It is possible that the printing of Filson's book at Wilmington, and his map at Philadelphia, caused a separation in the first place, and furnishes a reason for the books offered for sale, as well as others, being found without maps. The map, moreover, was sold by Filson separately from the book, as shown by an account of sales made out by him now in my possession.

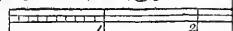
Analytical Outline of Filson's History.

The book of Filson, as it came from the press of James Adams, was a quaint little leather-bound octavo of one hundred and eighteen pages. It had a title-page, an advertisement, and a preface with as much formality as if it had been a volume of a thousand or more pages; and what is odd enough, its title-page was quite out of proportion to the matter which followed. It reminded one of a huge

This

KENTU

Drawn from actual
is engraved with the map
to the Honorable the
United States of
to his Excellency George
late Commander in the
Army, By
John P.



Scale of 10 Miles to an

The stream of the Ohio is in every
part Moderate, except the Rapids.



Genl Clark's Fort
150,000 Acres

Clarksville

The Rapids

Point

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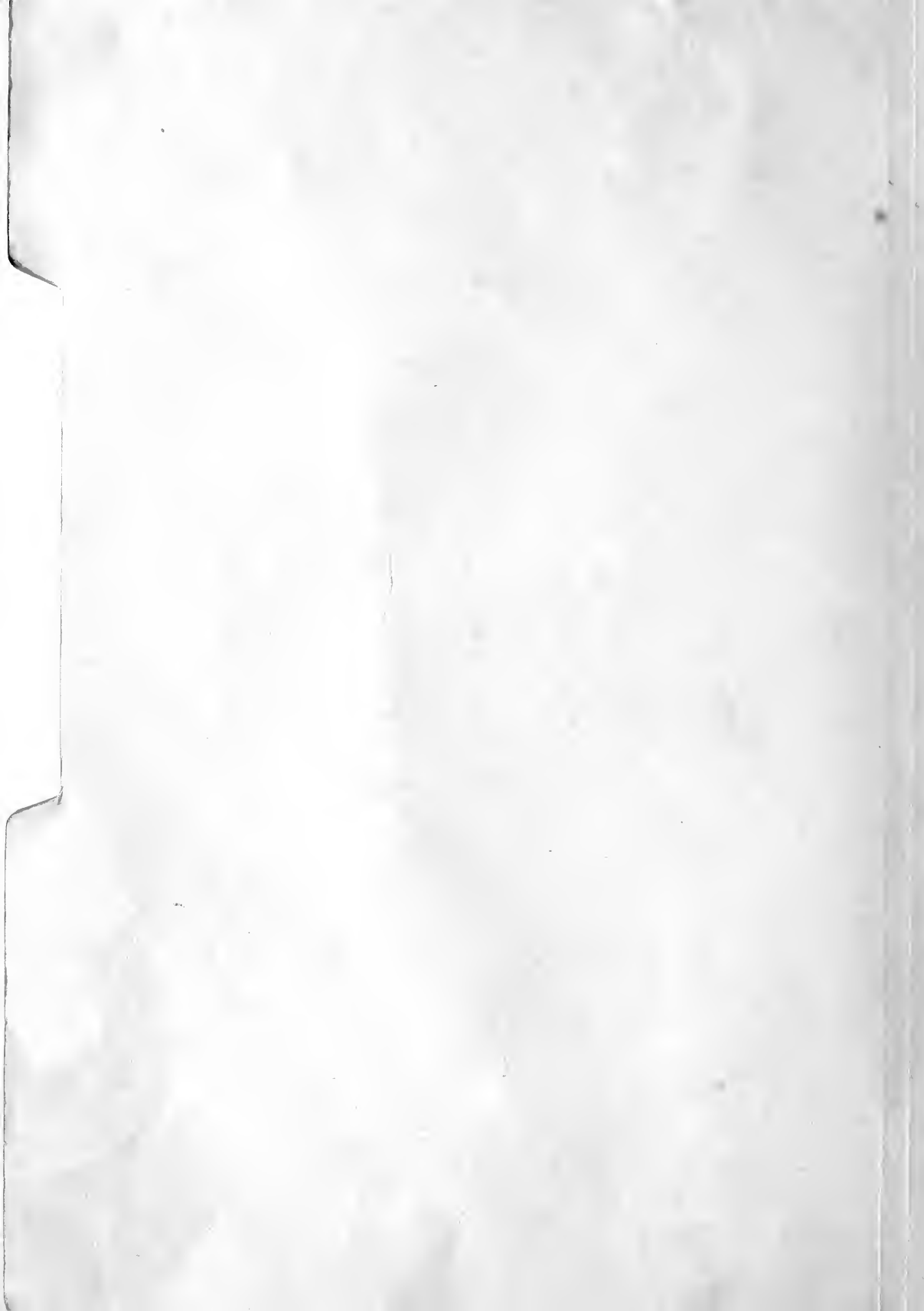
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portico in front of a small house, or a great door leading into a diminutive apartment. When we take up the tenth great volume of Bancroft, and find upon the title-page the simple inscription, "History of the United States from the Discovery of the American Continent," we can but be struck with the following voluminous inscription copied, word for word, from Filson's little book:

THE
DISCOVERY, SETTLEMENT,
and Present State of
KENTUCKE:
And
AN ESSAY towards the TOPOGRAPHY, and NAT-
URAL HISTORY of that important Country:
To which is added
AN APPENDIX,
Containing
I. The ADVENTURES of Col. Daniel Boon, one of the first
Settlers, comprehending every important Occurrence
in the political History of that Province.
II. The MINUTES of the *Piankashaw* Council, held at *Post*
St. Vincennes, April 15, 1784.
III. An ACCOUNT of the Indian Nations inhabiting within
the Limits of the Thirteen United States, their Manners
and Customs, and Reflections on their Origin.
IV. The STAGES and DISTANCES between *Philadelphia* and
the Falls of the *Ohio*; from *Pittsburg* to *Pensacola* and
several other Places.
The Whole illustrated by a new and accurate MAP of *Kentucke*
and the Country adjoining, drawn from actual surveys.

BY JOHN FILSON.

Wilmington: Printed by JAMES ADAMS, 1784.

The Advertisement and Preface.

If it was necessary, however, to have in the title-page anything more than Filson's account of Kentucky, it must be conceded that what the author gave fairly indicated the singular medley which followed. After the title-page came, under the head of "Advertisement," a card signed by Daniel Boone, Levi Todd, and James Harrod, certifying that they had revised the author's work, and recommending it to the public "as an exceeding good performance, containing as accurate a description of our country as we think can possibly be given." Then followed the author's preface, in which he acknowledged himself indebted to Colonels Boone, Todd, and Harrod, and especially to Colonel Boone, for the assistance they had given him, and in which he makes the remarkable declaration that his book was not published for lucrative motives, "but solely to inform the world of the happy climate and plentiful soil of this favoured region." The preface of Filson and the advertisement of Boone, Todd, and Harrod suggest a little four-handed mutual admiration society.

"The Discovery, Settlement, and Purchase of Kentucky."

Next under the above head come four pages in which are briefly given the supposed discovery of the country, the purchase of the soil from the Indians by Henderson

& Co. south of the Kentucky River, and by Donaldson north of it, and the adventures of those who first settled upon it. In this short sketch, however, are serious errors, which have had their influence in misleading public opinion as to what may be called the discovery of Kentucky. Filson makes James McBride to have been the discoverer of Kentucky in 1754, when he cut his name on a tree at the mouth of the Kentucky River. McBride was in no sense the discoverer of Kentucky. The French, at a much earlier date, used the Ohio River as a channel of communication between their settlements in Canada and those on the Mississippi, and French traders as well as English were on the Ohio and along the Kentucky shore, if not upon the inland rivers, long before the date of McBride. The Duke de Mirepoix, in a communication to the British Ministry in 1755, stated that the detachment of French troops sent against the Chickasaw Indians in 1739 went by way of the Ohio River; and in the great history of New France, by Charlevoix, the sixth volume contains a map of this country in 1744, on which the Falls of the Ohio are laid down, and above them a place designated at which the bones of the elephant were found in 1729. Of course this place was the Big Bone Lick, and the bones those of the mastodon afterward supposed to be first found by later discoverers. John Howard crossed the mountains

from Virginia and sailed down the Ohio to the Mississippi in a canoe in 1742, where he was captured by the Indians. In 1750 Thomas Walker passed through the eastern portion of Kentucky, and a French map, published by Robert de Vaugondy in 1755, shows "*Walker's Etabliss Anglois*," on a branch of the Cumberland River, in 1750. In 1751 Christopher Gist passed through Kentucky on his way to North Carolina, and his journal, published in Pownall's *North America* in 1776, shows the route he took. Indeed, so far from McBride's being entitled to the honor of discovering Kentucky in 1754, he is no more entitled to that glory than Moscoso, who sailed along its shore from the mouth of the Ohio to the Tennessee line in 1543; or LaSalle, who went from the headwaters of the Allegheny to the Falls of the Ohio in 1669-70. In 1727 Daniel Coxe published at London a book descriptive of the province of Carolana, in North America, in which he sets forth the travels and discoveries of an Englishman, called Col. Wood, in this country in 1654, just one hundred years before McBride carved his record on the tree at the mouth of the Kentucky River. With such records as these we can hardly concede the honor of discovering Kentucky to him, of whom we know nothing except his name upon a tree at the mouth of the Kentucky, with the date 1754.

Topographical and Mixed History.

We next have thirty-eight pages of mixed topographical, natural, and civil history, somewhat after the manner in which a real-estate agent of modern times would present the merits of a country in which he had lands for sale. It consists of descriptive essays under the following ten heads: 1st. Situation and Boundaries; 2d. Rivers; 3d. Nature of the soil; 4th. Air and Climate; 5th. Soil and Produce; 6th. Quadrupeds; 7th. Inhabitants; 8th. Curiosities; 9th. Rights of Land; 10th. Trade of Kentucky. These headings indicate that but little civil or political history is given, while all that can be said of the country as an inducement to strangers to come and buy and settle has ample attention. It is described as a land as good as that which the inspired writer of old called "a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of the valleys and hills; a land of wheat and barley and vines." No one can read this part of the history of Filson without concluding that it was intended to advertise the rich lands of Kentucky, and enable speculators to sell as many acres as possible to those whom the book might induce to come to the country. Under the last of these headings, "Trade of Kentucky," appears an allusion to the steamboat invented by James Rum-

say, of Virginia. It was to carry a burden of ten tons, and move from twenty-five to forty miles per day, up stream, against a current of ten miles an hour. This was in 1784, and is remarkable for an early mention of the practicability of propelling vessels on water by steam. It was three years before Fitch launched his steamer upon the Delaware, and twenty-three years before the Clermont of Fulton moved upon the waters of the Hudson.

Want of Domestic Scenes.

The fault of this part of Filson's history is that too much is said about the country and too little about the people. If the author had drawn a picture of domestic life, in the times about which he was writing, how much more interesting it would have been than his descriptions of a country soon to change as the forest faded away before the ax of civilization, and farms and villages usurped the abode of the deer and the buffalo! He should have conducted his readers into the picketed fort and shown them the pioneer mothers, in time of peace, spinning the yarn and weaving the cloth that was to clothe the family, and, in time of war, molding the bullets that their husbands were to fire at the besieging savage. He should have made them guests at a mar-

riage feast, where the joyous hearts of a whole station gathered around the puncheon table loaded with those luxuries of the season, venison, corn-bread and hominy, served in wooden vessels; and the next day conducted them to the house-raising, where all the neighbors joined in building a cabin for the newly married couple to begin wedded life; and yet again to the "house-warming," in which the neighbors all danced the new cabin into use. He should have shown us a funeral, where the lamented hunter was laid in his rough board coffin and sunk into his unmarked grave, or hidden beneath piles of stone and wood amid the sorrows and tears of all. The children in their log school-house; the congregation in the solemn woods listening to the itinerant preacher, with rifles in hand and no walls around except the trunks of the native trees and no roof above except their arching branches; the Sunday gathering of the neighbors outside of the fort-gate to chat over the affairs of the settlement; the evening dance to the stirring sound of the violin in the hands of some old family negro at the cabin of a pioneer mother ever ready to sacrifice her own comfort to the pleasure of the young—these and other scenes in domestic life would have imparted an interest and value to the narrative that nothing else could replace.

The Appendix to the History.

After finishing his sketch of the discovery, purchase, and settlement of Kentucky, Filson added an appendix which was greater than the previous work. The appendix was as much out of proportion to the preceding matter as the title-page was to the succeeding. While only forty-eight pages were required for the main work, the appendix consumed seventy.

The Boone Narrative.

The first article in the appendix appears under the head of "The adventures of Colonel Daniel Boon, formerly a hunter, containing a narrative of the wars of Kentucke." This article covers thirty-three and one-half pages, and is the most interesting, as well as the most valuable, part of the work. It is the gem of the collection. It is the little fountain from which have flowed so many enchanting streams of Indian conflict and pioneer adventure in the "dark and bloody ground." It begins with Boone's first coming to Kentucky, in 1769, and gives the scenes in which he was engaged until 1784, when the work was published. The events in the

career of Boone thus narrated were the initial steps of Kentucky's settlement, and make up the charming first chapter of our Western annals. The little work is not without its faults, such as representing herds of buffalo ignorant of the violence of man, when the Indians had been killing them for ages unknown; trees gay with blossoms on the 22d of December, when the forests of Kentucky seldom show a leaf; views of the Ohio River and the mountains at the same time from an eminence in Kentucky, when there is no known point from which such a sight could be had without the use of a telescope, which Boone does not say he had; and making the plain old pioneer compare the ragged tops of the Cumberland Mountains to the ruins of Palmyra and Persepolis, when it may be doubted if he could distinguish these ancient cities from Gog and Magog, or that he had any just conception of the classical allusion. Nevertheless, with all its faults and all its omissions of scenes in which Boone was not engaged, it is the charming first story of border wars in Kentucky, and will grow more enchanting as the scenes it presents recede further and further into the past. The author gives the old pioneer the full credit of the narrative by stating, in the preface, that it was written from his own mouth, and by publishing it with his full name subscribed thereto. It was

from this sketch by Filson that the fame of Boone took its rise—that he became an historic character, occupying conspicuous pages in books, not only in his own but in foreign languages, and even secured a place in the deathless verse of the immortal Byron.

The Aborigines of Kentucky.

The next article in the appendix is a short one of four and a half pages, giving the proceedings of a council held by Thomas J. Dalton with the Piankashaw Indians at Vincennes, in 1784. This is followed by an essay on the Indians, covering twenty pages, giving the different tribes east of the Mississippi and nearest to Kentucky, their numbers and origin, their persons and habits, their genius and religion. He enumerates thirty-four different tribes, and estimates their total number at 20,000, with from 4,000 to 5,000 warriors. In this article on the Indians Filson takes occasion to give his views about Prince Madoc planting a Welsh colony in America in the twelfth century. He does not say, in so many words, that he believed the story, but the inference is not violent that he did believe it. After premising that frequent accounts had come to the Western settlements of a tribe

of Indians dwelling far up the Missouri River, who spoke the Welsh language and retained some ceremonies of the Christian worship, he thus brings forward a prominent Kentuckian in support of the theory:

"Captain Abraham Chaplain, of Kentucke, a gentleman whose veracity may be entirely depended upon, assured the author that in the late war, being with his company in garrison at Kaskasky, some Indians came there, and speaking in the Welsh dialect, were perfectly understood and conversed with by two Welshmen in his company, and that they informed them of the situation of their nation as mentioned above."

If Filson had added to this testimony of Captain Chaplain the letter of Rev. Morgan Jones, in 1685, and the narrative of Isaac Stewart, in 1782, he would have presented in a group three of the best arguments that have ever been made in favor of the old Welsh Chronicle found in the history of Caradoc. The discoveries of the last hundred years have left no place on our continent for the abode of the descendants of Prince Madoc; but it is strange that when an Indian chief of the tribe of Modoc was captured in the Black Hills a few years ago, the antiquarians did not again revive the discussion of the Welsh colony of the twelfth century in America.

Treaty of 1783 and Table of Distances.

Filson completed his work with an extract from the treaty of 1783, followed by a table of distances, in which he gives the route by land from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh and around through Virginia and Cumberland Gap to the Falls of the Ohio. Recent measurements have shown unimportant errors of computation in the 320 miles he gives from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh, and the 826 through Virginia and the Gap to the Falls.

Rarity of the History and Map

Thus, at the risk of being tedious, I have given an outline of the contents of Filson's book, now become so rare as to be absolutely beyond the reach of the general reader. It is the rarest of the rare Kentucky books, and not one in a thousand of the present generation has ever seen it. The few copies that exist are either locked up in public libraries or in the collections of private citizens, who exclude them from the shelves of booksellers until death separates an owner from his treasure, and thus enables a new bibliophile to obtain it at an exorbitant price. Recently a copy in the Brinley

collection was sold at auction in New York for \$120, about three hundred times the original pittance realized by the author for it when first published. An account made out by Filson against Jones, in the spring of 1785, shows that the book was charged at two shillings and sixpence and the map at five shillings, or about forty-one cents for the book and eighty-three cents for the map. It is probable that the exceedingly great scarcity of the map would make one of them bring a proportionately high price if thrown upon the market in our times. This great rarity of both the book and map has induced Robert Clarke & Co., of Cincinnati, to re-issue them, and they will probably soon appear in the excellent Ohio Valley Historical Series of these publishers.

Reprints of Filson's History.

In 1785, the year after the first appearance of the work, it was translated into French and published at Paris by M. Parraud. From the French edition was omitted Filson's table of distances, but to it added the acts of Congress as to the admission of new States and the disposition of the lands ceded by the States; extracts from classical authors, indicating a knowledge of

America among the ancients; a collection of passages showing the government, the councils, and the eloquence of the Indians; and an extract from Isaac Stewart's account of his captivity among the savages. Imlay, in the second edition of his "Topographical Description of North America," published at London in 1793, embodied the entire work of Filson, and repeated it in his third edition of 1797. In the year 1793 Samuel Campbell, of New York, issued an edition of the works of Imlay and Filson in two volumes, the second of which contained the work of Filson. In each of these publications Filson was given full credit for his entire work, but not so with some other reprints. In the American Museum, a monthly periodical printed at Philadelphia from 1787 to 1793, was set the mean example of separating one part of Filson's work from the rest, and reprinting it without credit to the author. In the October number of that journal for 1787 appeared the adventures of Daniel Boone, as written and published by Filson, with the statement that Boone was the author. No one from reading the article in this magazine would have known that such a man as Filson had ever existed. The unkind thing thus begun by this magazine found plenty of congenial imitators afterwards; and, even in Kentucky, Samuel L. Metcalf published a collection of

narratives at Lexington, in 1821, in which that of Boone appears first in the book, without one word to indicate that it had been written by Filson. Thus, partly by the inadvertence of the author in publishing this narrative with the name of Daniel Boone subscribed in full thereto, and partly by the meanness of reprinters, the most important part of his work has been separated from him and the authorship thereof given to Boone, who never himself claimed any such honor. There is not a page in it that would not have cost Boone more hard work than an Indian campaign. Boone could hunt, shoot, roam the woods, and fight the Indians as well as anybody, but when it came to writing it was hard labor for him to put the simplest ideas in the crudest form on paper.

The Boone Narrative Attributed to Marshall.

Outside of books and magazines, tradition attempted to bring down to us the shabby report that the narrative of Boone had been written by Humphrey Marshall, the historian. This report probably grew out of the fact that Filson may have submitted his manuscript to Marshall for correction. There is some indication in the narrative of the pen of Marshall having made revisory touches here and there. I have manuscripts of Filson

which show that his spelling was not always good, his grammar sometimes incorrect, his use of capitals often bad, and his words now and then illy chosen. It was lucky for him if his manuscript could pass under the correcting hand of such a scholar as Marshall, and I doubt not this was done. I have as little doubt, however, that Filson was the author of the Boone narrative, and that he wrote it, as he says in his preface, from the mouth of Boone himself. Marshall lived in Kentucky for half a century after the death of Filson, and published and republished his history without laying claim to the Boone narrative. He would not have failed to appropriate so precious a jewel if it had belonged to him. Not only did he lay no claim to it, but, in the preface to the second edition of his history, he expressly alludes to the Boone narrative as having been written by Filson.

His Return to Kentucky after Publishing his History.

While Filson was writing his book and the work was passing through the press, he considered himself a citizen of his native Pennsylvania. In his preface to his book he stated that he was not an inhabitant of Ken-

tucky. When his book was published, however, he prepared for another trip to Kentucky, and this time with the seeming intention of a permanent home. He was then the owner of lands in the new country, had written its history, had many acquaintances there, and it was natural that he should wish to become a citizen thereof.

The Wagon Journey to Pittsburgh.

In the spring of 1785 he secured a Jersey wagon with a canvas top for the purpose of transporting himself and such articles as he wanted to carry with him to Kentucky. It seems that he had but one horse to draw his wagon built for two, and consequently he made arrangements with John Rice Jones, a young lawyer who wished to go to Kentucky, to use a horse belonging to Jones in his team, and furnish seats in the wagon for the wife and child of Jones. With the Joneses as passengers and their luggage, added to some books and maps and other articles of his own for freight, the vehicle set out from Wilmington April 25, 1785, and arrived at Philadelphia the same day. On the following day it started on the long, weary, mountainous road to Pittsburgh, distant 320 miles, through Lancaster, Middletown, Harris' Ferry, Carlisle, Shippensburg, Chamberstown, Fort Loudon, Fort Little-

ton, Juniata Creek, Bedford, Stony Creek, and Fort Ligonier. He reached Pittsburgh on the 26th of May, and the twenty-six days consumed in making the trip give some idea of the difficulties of travel in those times. The average distance made per day was about twelve miles, and they were thankful to accomplish that much in the midst of the obstacles that beset them. No wonder Jones was out of sorts when he reached Pittsburgh. Filson had to doctor him, which he did by administering two doses of Peruvian bark and two "vomits," for which he charged him nine shillings. Jones, however, seems to have grown well enough under the treatment of Filson to have disposed of two of Filson's books and maps at Pittsburgh for fifteen shillings. Nothing is said about Mrs. Jones and the baby, but, as they are charged nothing for Filson's barks and emetics, it is to be supposed that they stood the wagon's joltings better than Jones himself.

The Flatboat Trip to Louisville.

On Sunday, May 27, 1785, the wagon was abandoned at Pittsburgh for the more easy-going flatboat, better known as the Kentucky boat. The party took passage in one of these arks loaded with horses, cattle, grocer-

ies, dry goods, hardware, farming implements, and human beings bound for the Falls of the Ohio. Along the channel of "the beautiful river," severing the dark forests on either side like the zig-zag lightning's path through the black clouds, they floated on the gentle current. The huge old sycamores and cottonwoods that had sentineled the wild banks for untold years stood at the water's edge and leaned over the stream and beheld their widespreading arms and giant forms mirrored in the crystal waters. Everything along the shores indicated the uninterrupted abode of the wild animals of the forest, except here and there, upon some rich bottom raised above the vernal floods, peeped from the rank foliage solitary mounds that had been reared so long ago by human beings that their builders had passed away without a tradition, a history, or a name. The haughty buffalo and the timid deer, disdaining the smaller streams that paid tribute to the Ohio, came to the margin of the main river to slake their thirst, and there was nothing in all the vast solitude to remind one of civilized life except the rude vessel that floated along the current. On the thirteenth day after leaving Pittsburgh the boat was moored in the mouth of Beargrass Creek, June 10, 1785. The long journey was now ended, and the day of reckoning arrived. Filson having acted as paymaster on the

way, when they arrived at Louisville made out an account against Jones for his share of the expenses of the trip. The following is a copy of the original, in the handwriting of Filson, now in my possession:

JOHN RICE JONES Dr. TO JOHN FILSON.

	£	S.	D.
April 30, 1785. To cash paid for his freight and passage from Philadelphia to Wilmington,	0	15	0
To keeping his horse before our procedure on our journey 15 days, . . .	0	15	0
May 26. His passage in the wagon to Pittsburgh; his wife and child's passage to Pittsburgh,	3	7	6
Carriage of 217 lbs at 45s pr C.,	4	7	7
Two books and two maps of mine in Pittsburgh,	0	15	0
Cash in pay for bread and butter in do.,	0	6	0
Two vomits,	0	4	0
Pulverized Peruvian barks at twice,	0	5	0
Cash for his horse feed after arrival in Pittsburgh,	0	1	2
Removing his property from the town in Pittsburgh on board the boat,	0	5	0
Pennsylvania currency,	11	11	3
Equal to do. in Virginia currency,	9	5	0
June 10. To one of my maps at Louisville,	5	...
	£9	10	0
	1	12	5
Balance due in Virginia currency,	£7	17	7

CONTRA CR.

Recd from John Rice Jones the services of his horse in my team to Pittsburgh in consequence of an agreement in Wilmington with him on act. of his passage in the wagon.

April 29, 1785. Reed from him in Wilmington one thermometer and	£. S. D.
case,	0 19 0
One Book of Carver's Travels,	0 9 0
One Book of Gibson's surveying,	0 12 0
Pennsylvania currency,	2 0 6
Equal do. in Virginia currency,	£1 12 5

**Filson Sues Jones, and Jones Tells Auerdotes
About Filson.**

This account Jones, possibly somewhat exhausted by the two "vomits" Filson had given him at Pittsburgh, and not quite restored by the Peruvian barks, did not promptly pay when they reached the Falls. Filson applied to Esquire Richard Terrell for advice as to the mode of making the tardy hurry up payment in this country. Terrell satisfied his inquiries, and having sworn Filson to the correctness of the account and the balance of £7 17s 7d, proceeded to enforce its payment by the pressing aid of the law. In due season judgment was rendered for the debt and execution issued against the goods and chattels of Jones for the amount, but no property could be found to satisfy it, and Filson watched his opportunity for better results. Finally he discovered what he thought was an extra cow on the premises of Jones, and got an

attachment from Esquire Alexander Breckinridge to secure it. Deputy Sheriff Reuben Eastin was hunted up and sent immediately with the attachment after the cow. But it turned out that the animal was "a gentleman cow," as Mrs. Jones expressed it, at her house on a visit, and so disregarding of fences and gates that she would be glad to get rid of him. The laugh as well as the costs were now upon Filson, and he quitted the case in disgust. Jones, who afterwards became a prominent member of the early bar of Louisville, used to tell this as well as the following anecdote about Filson: On one occasion, while their wagon was crossing the mountains, Filson, being in front and leading the horses, stooped down to examine a curious rock that had attracted his attention. While thus intent upon his lithological investigation, one of the horses passed on each side of him, and the wagon went over him until the rear axletree was above his head. Filson, then awaking to his situation, threw up his head which, coming in contact with the axletree, pretty nearly made an end of him. He was almost scalped, and made the balance of the way to Pittsburgh with a bandaged head. Filson took the accident good naturedly, however, and joked about manufacturing axletrees on a large scale and selling them to the Indians for an improved kind of scalping knives.

**He Sells his Ancestral Home and Seeks New Adventures
in the Illinois Country.**

After Filson's return to Kentucky in 1785, his roving habits and restless spirit caught the excitement then prevalent about the Illinois country, and he made several trips into this new region with the intention, perhaps, of publishing an account of it, as he had of Kentucky. In July, 1785, he left Louisville in a canoe and paddled his way down the Ohio and up the Wabash to Post St. Vincent. In August he returned through the woods to the Falls. Again in Louisville, he consummated his purpose to become a citizen of Kentucky. On the 14th of October he executed and delivered to Daniel Henry, a merchant of Louisville, a bond for a deed to his patrimonial estate of 240 acres on the west branch of the Brandywine, in the township of East Fallowfield, in Chester County, Pennsylvania. The penalty of this bond was £2,000, and in it Filson describes himself as a citizen of Kentucky. A singular feature of this bond is that it was witnessed by David Morgan, Benjamin Earickson, Daniel Buckley, Martin Carney, John Williams, and James Morrison, besides being acknowledged in open court and attested by William Johnston the clerk. The

tie that bound Filson to his native Brandywine was now loosed, and, although he was the owner of 1,500 acres of land which he had purchased of Squire Boone in Jefferson County, and described himself as a resident of that county, he does not appear to have been long enough in any one place, during his short career in Kentucky, to entitle it to the name of home. He was a restless, roving, visionary adventurer, making his sudden appearance at distant and unexpected places in exceedingly short intervals of time. Toward the close of the year 1785 he again went in a canoe over the long water-way down the Ohio and up the Wabash, from Louisville to Post St. Vincent, computed at 450 miles. This time he took the courses of the rivers with his compass, and estimated the distances by the time consumed in going over them in his canoe. He reached Vincennes about Christmas, and on the last day but one of the year executed an obligation to John Brown, then a rising young lawyer in Kentucky, who afterwards became not only the first member of Congress from Kentucky but the first from the great Valley of the Mississippi. This obligation, quaint in itself, is suggestive of a necessary custom of the times in which it was given. There was then but little trade between Kentucky and the Spanish possessions on the Mississippi, and the gross pro-

ducts of the country, such as corn and tobacco, could not be easily transported to Philadelphia, the principal source from which goods were obtained. The fur of the beaver, however, was light for its value, and could be profitably sent to Philadelphia in exchange for goods. Hence beaver fur became a medium of exchange, and supplied the place of money. Obligations were made payable in money or in beaver fur at a fixed price per pound. The obligation given by Filson to Brown was in accordance with this custom. Filson owed Brown \$61, maybe for borrowed money but possibly for professional services, for Brown was a lawyer and Filson one of those unfortunates who was forever needing legal help. The original obligation is now in my possession, and the following is a copy:

"I acknowledge myself indebted to John Brown the amount of sixty one dollars or sixty-one pounds of beaver, which I promise to pay to him upon demand next spring either at Post St. Vincent or Falls of Ohio. Witness my hand this 30th day of Decr., Anno Domini 1785.

Testes, John Adams.

JOHN FILSON."

Filson Mistakes Muskrats for Beavers.

While this obligation on the part of Filson to pay a debt in money or beaver fur indicates nothing more than a custom of the times, an anecdote which has been

handed down concerning him makes it probable that he was engaged in the fur trade. Before he became an expert in judging of furs, a trapper proposed to sell him some muskrat skins. Filson told him he was dealing in beaver furs only, and that the skins offered would not suit him. The cunning old trapper, quickly measuring Filson's capacity as a fur trader, went away, removed the tails from his muskrat skins, and returned with them. He now offered them to Filson as young beavers, the most valuable of all. Filson bought the supposed young beavers and paid well for them, but when he came to sell them again found himself badly sold. He never bought any more muskrat skins for young beavers. John Sanders, a famous old hunter, used to tell this story about Filson, and was suspected of having planned the joke and profited by the fraud.

A Dead Body Laid at Filson's Door.

The first half of the year 1786 was spent by Filson in the Illinois country, with his residence at Post St. Vincent, then the headquarters of that region. In his will he states that he owned property here, and some of his known transactions indicate that he was here engaged in trade, with business connections extending to the Falls

of the Ohio. It is probable, however, that much of his time was spent here in collecting information for his contemplated publication about this country. His visionary character suited him better for making books than success in business pursuits. An anecdote, told to me by William Marshall concerning him at Vincennes, illustrates the recklessness of life and the serious subjects about which jokes were perpetrated in those times. A French trader had been killed in a drunken frolic with the Indians on New Year's night, and while the orgies continued some grim wags of the town stole away the corpse in the night and laid it before Filson's door. It was the purpose of these cadaverous jokers to see how much Filson would be frightened the next morning when he found the lifeless visitor at his door. As a matter of course, Filson could not see where the joke came in, but supposed the corpse had been laid at his door to divert suspicion from the murderer and direct it to him. Filson vehemently denounced the hardened criminal who could thus heartlessly direct suspicion against an innocent character, but never once suspected the ghastly humor that lay at the bottom of the transaction.

Filson's Unpublished Writings.

What Filson wrote about the Illinois country, though designed by him for publication, was never published, so far as I have been able to ascertain. After his death and the death of General George Rogers Clark, four of his manuscripts were found among the papers of Clark, with whom he had probably left them in his lifetime. These manuscripts are now in the possession of Dr. Lyman C. Draper, of Madison, Wisconsin, and may be briefly described as follows:

1. A diary of his journey from Pennsylvania down the Ohio and up the Wabash rivers to Post St. Vincent in the spring and summer of 1785. Small quarto, 32 pages.
2. An account of his trip from Vincennes to Louisville by land in August, 1785. 12mo, 14 pages.
3. "A journal of two voyages from the Falls of Ohio to Post St. Vincent, on Wabash River, containing a variety of remarks and intelligence from that remote quarter, by the author of a late publication, with a few remarks upon the situation of Pittsburgh and the voyage down the rapids." Foolscap, 12 pages.
4. An account of his attempted trip by water from Vincennes to Louisville in August, 1786, the attack upon

him by the Indians on the Wabash, and his subsequent trip to the Falls of the Ohio by land. Small folio, 22 pages.

The last named manuscript affords more of the individuality of Filson than any of the others, and an extract from it will be acceptable to those who have not access to the original. These manuscripts contain information about the Illinois country that has never been published, and Dr. Draper expects to use it in the life of General Clark he intends to publish. He has no objections, however, to my use of the information relating particularly to Filson, but, on the contrary, has generously furnished me with it. On the 1st of June, 1786, Filson set out from Vincennes to go down the Wabash and up the Ohio to Louisville. He secured a pirogue and placed in it his trunks and such other articles as he wished to transport to the Falls of the Ohio. Having employed three men to assist on the trip, he started out, with two of them so drunk that himself and the other could only be depended upon for attention to the boat. When they reached the mouth of White River what were called Indian signs in those days began to appear. Six miles further on they saw a large wigwam on the western bank of the Wabash, and when they got opposite to it the Indians rushed out and began an attack upon their frail vessel. The rest of

the narrative is given in the language of Filson himself, copied by Dr. Draper from his manuscript, word for word and letter for letter, punctuation, spelling, grammar, and all just as Filson wrote it, as follows:

Extract from Filson's Manuscript.

"I told my men there was Indians and immediately about fifteen guns were fired at us, accompanied with that infernal yell, which ever carries they idea of terror with the sound. Being too far distant from shore to receive much damage, though several bullets lodged in our boat, we steered across the river, but was immediately pursued by a pirogue, crowded with savages, firing upon us, and yelling to discourage flight; My place being in the steerage, they directed their balls at me, numbers struck the boat, but although they came like hail, yet we gained the shore unhurt, my hat only received damages. It is impossible to paint the manner of our flight & the pursuit; no human warriors pursue more violently pursue the unhappy objects of their rage, than savages. Our arms consisted of only two fuzees and one sword; the savages being advanced within fifty yards of shore, I directed my men to stand and fight them, they being advanced a few steps to flee, turned to me with a melancholy look, and saw cruel

death approaching; self-preservation determined their answers for escape. I then told them with speediest flight to save themselves, if possible. As I advance to land took up two small trunks, containing some valuable articles; these I cast under the nettles, a little distance from shore, and entered the woods in a different direction from my men. like the unhappy mariner ready to sink with his vessel in the foaming surge, used prayers and a vigorous flight for safety. the last hope of relief. These were not ineffectual; a wonderful deliverance indeed! Sure some guardian angel averted the impending danger. Who can reflect upon the circumstances without terror? the shore red with bloody savages, I may say just at my heels, who, that have not experienced such a situation can possibly conceive the distress? In flight I oft turned my eyes from behind some ancient friendly tree, to view some blood-thirsty savage, in full chase, with his terrible right hand, to lodge me in the land of silence. Sometimes I lay concealed in the thickest of cane and nettles, but immediately quitted the insecure covering, for to the sagacious savage my track must be obvious, as the herbage yielded to every step; and being wet did not recover their rectitude. Concluding that a crafty flight was the only possible means to ensure safety, I used many turnings and windings by crossing my track and walking back and on logs and spaces

clear of herbage. Wandering about two hours through the woods, I assayed to return to the spot where we were obliged to fly, and finding that the savages were gone over with their prize, I came near where I left my trunks, and seeing them safe, took them up, and departed, bending my course toward Post Vincent, which was thirty miles distant on a N. E. course. two of my men had directed their course up White river, and about half a mile from Wabash was cruelly massacred: my third man had concealed himself under a large fallen tree, a little distance from the river, that was closely fenced on either side by nettles: there trembling and pale he saw the savages returning with the clothing and scalps of his companions.

“Whether these bloodhounds concluded me out of reach, or passed my footsteps unobserved, or attended more to the plunder, is a mystery: but as we had some spirituous liquor on board, that probably might be the Lethe in my favor. With hasty steps I left the dangerous place, bearing the trunks, the reliques of my property, to the amount of 800 dollars in that country. In passing a few miles up White river, I saw many late indian camps which induced me to cross it the first opportunity: and having found some drift wood, by fastening a few logs with bark, I formed a raft, on which I comited my body to the full flowing stream: My trunks I had fastened on part of an

old plank separately. Having advanced a little distance from shore, my raft parted, and rendered my situation desperate; when I escaped the savages I thought the bitterness of death was past, but now concluded my time must be near a period. A gleam of hope was yet left, in this dilemma I fastened upon one the logs, which being small, scarcely supported me from total immersion; with my left hand I held the little plank & with my right rowed across the river, about 400 yards wide. Thus I escaped again and continued my course through the shadow of death; for although I met no savages, there was the greatest probability I should. The day began to decline, and heavy showers fell; the briers and thorns tore my cloaths, and my flesh experienced the most excruciating pain, from their repeated assaults, and the invenomed nettles. Hunger now began to rage. I felt languid and my burthen increased with wet. Those lines in homer came lively

“Oh frends a thousand ways frail mortals to lead

“To the cold tomb, and dreadful all to tread;

“But dreadful most, when by a slow decay

“Pale hunger wastes the manly strength away.

“Late in the evening I advanced to the river Destice, on the east side of the Wabash, six leagues below the Post, and attempting to ford, it was near being drowned, but recovering the shore again I made a small raft and

went over. being soon overtaken by night, the moon shone clear, I continued to travel by its light, though a disagreeable walk: at length worn down with fatigues, I sat down, and attempted to strike fire, but my powder being damp, it was impracticable. Myriads of misketoos surrounded me, humming their unwelcome tune to my distressed body, and though in a very uncomfortable state, and under the power of these tormentors, sunk into sleep, and awoke not until day appeared again; when rousing up I continued my course, and arrived about noon at the Grand Parery containing about 10,000 acres; being then about six miles from town, it being visible. Along this extensive tract, which is exceedingly level and fertile, where scarcely a tree or shrub is seen, but variegated with pastures, meadows, fields of corn, and other fruits; and not the smallest enclosure with a fence or hedge throughout. The different plantations were conspicuous, with numbers of the inhabitants cultivating the corn-fields; had I beheld this in a day of prosperity, it must have afforded me pleasure; but all these laborious people were in dread of the savages, for if any imprudently fired a gun, with trembling hearts they all prepared for flight—The french laboured without guards, being less the object of indian aversion than the americans; who at this time could not turn up the earth with a plow, unless guarded

by armed men. To one of these military occupants I first advanced, who scarcely believed their eyes, so greatly was my condition altered: such is the difference between prosperity and adversity. Here I met the warmest and most unfeigned sympathy, for in a land of suffering the unfortunate have that consolation. The humane people flocked around me to hear the melancholy tale, and gave me some wholesome provisions to refresh my emaciated spirits. Immediately quitting their tillage, conducted me to town in a carriage.

"I took my lodging at the house of Colonel Small; and after having related the consequences of my adventure to the alarmed inhabitants, I advised to send a party to destroy the robbers, and retake the property; which then was easily practicable; many professed a willingness to proceed, but the Major part maturely considering that it would weaken their number in town, the indians by taking advantage of their absence, might make themselves masters of their fort, and destroy the women & children; it was therefore thought prudent to omit so interesting a design. Much distressed in body and mind, for some days, I was an object of pity; but recovering a little of the fatigue, was advised to use some sportive exercises to prevent a malady; the good effects of this I soon experienced; by which I am satisfied that a concise and diligent exer-

cise of body and mind, is essential to overcome the bad consequences that often result from a capital misfortune. Two principal causes moved me to expose myself at this time to danger on Wabash, one was the unhappy contentions existing between the french and american inhabitants of the Post, on account of the unavoidable disputes daily multiplied between the latter and the savages; the former opposing every measure to which they were impelled by necessity to defend themselves from savage hostilities. so much influence has interesting commerce with mankind, that in effect it causes social and civilized beings to laugh at the calamity of others, though unjustly and barbarous the cause. secondly a desire to see my friends, and native soil—Chester county in Pennsylvania. Being now unhappily convinced that a passage by water was impossible, I determined to go by land, It was then thought impossible to leave the Post either by land or water, without imminent danger; the savages being insiduously ambuscaded round the parery. My friends earnestly desired me to stay, representing the danger consequent upon such an undertaking. I thanked them for their advice, adding that from the late interposition of heaven in my favor it was plain that I was not reserved for a severer fate, but some valuable purpose. Being well refreshed in ten days, and finding a good hardy woods-

man intending the journey also, we agreed to leave the Post in the night of the twelfth of June. The moon shone with an agreeable lustre, and accompanied a small distance by some of our most valuable friends, we directed our course for the falls of ohio; and during the nocturnal hours traveled about fifteen miles: Although every step was disagreeable through brushy woods, and swampy grounds, yet safety from savages, afforded us some pleasure: next day rafted over White river, A. M., continuing our course one and a half point south of east; concluding ourselves out of the reach of the savages lurking around the Post. The country lying between the Post and Louisville or Clarksville has a diversity of soil and timber and this being my second tour, suppose myself able to form a good judgment thereof; which for the information and satisfaction of my gentle readers for whose sake I write; have delineated my two journeys on my map of the country, which from my own and some others observation I rest assured, is the best that can be given at this day. The explanation thereof, with the plan annexed, points out the particulars referring thereto. I concluded the journey in seven painful days, and arrived safe at the falls of ohio.*

* Sailed in a barge to the Post from the falls of ohio in July, 1785, which time I truly took the meanders of ohio and wabash with my compass, and returned through the woods with the indians for my guides, and having the prospect of a publication, made the best observations possible."

He Goes from Kentucky to Pennsylvania by Land.

The sad experience which Filson had thus had with the Indians, in his attempt to go from Vincennes to Louisville by water, seems to have given him a kind of hydrophobia and determined him, after he reached the Falls, to continue his journey to Pennsylvania by land. It was a serious undertaking to go on horseback from Louisville to Chester County, Pennsylvania. With boats constantly ascending the Ohio to Pittsburgh, more than two-thirds of the distance, it would appear like a Quixotic adventure to attempt the whole journey by land. Filson, however, remembering no doubt the Indians on the Wabash, did attempt and accomplish it. Baffled at first at Louisville by the running away of his horse, he secured another, threw his saddlebags across its back, and early in September he was jogging along the old wilderness road. The very names of the stations along this dismal route suggest the dreary wilderness in which most of them were situated. Here is the list of the stopping places and their distances apart, as Filson made it out himself: From the Falls of the Ohio to the Salt works, 20 miles; thence to Bardstown 25, Harbison's 25, Harland's 10, Harrod's Station 4, Logan's Station 7, Whitly's Station 5, Col. Edward's at Crab Orchard 5, English Sta-

tion 3, Ford on Rock Castle River 25, Hazle Patch 10, Laurel River 15, Raccoon Spring 2, down Richland Creek 6, Richland Creek 8, Stinking Creek 7, Flat Lick 2, Fork of Cumberland River 9, Cumberland Mountain 3, Martin's Cabins 20, Valley Station 25, Walden's Ridge 4, Powel's Mountain 3, Block House 33, Washington Court House 15, Head of Holstein 45, Boyd's 5, Stone Mill 8, Fort Chisel 11, Forks of the Road 12, New River 16, Alleghany Mountain 12, Patterson's on Roanoak 8, Wood's on Catawba River 9, Bottetout Court House 21, James River 12, North Fork of James River 18, Stanton 37, North Branch of Shenandoah 15, Shenandoah River 29, Woodstock 15, Storer's Town 12, Newtown 10, Winchester 8, Martinsburg 20, Wadkin's Ferry on Potomack 13, Stone House Tavern 13, other side of the Mountain 25, Mountain at Black Gap 7, Hunterstown 3, Abbottstown 10, Yorktown 15, Wright's on Susquehannah 12, Lancaster 10, and thence to the Brandywine 50 miles, making in all from Louisville to his home about 800 miles. Such a distance on horseback over mountains, across rivers, and through forests is frightful to us of the age of railroads and steamboats, but it did not deter Filson. Neither was it considered much of an undertaking by our pioneer mothers, who either walked it or rode over it on horseback with dauntless hearts when they first came to Kentucky.

At His Old Home in Chester.

When the weary journey was ended, and Filson had reached the banks of the Brandywine, September and October had passed and the month of November had come. At his old home, in the midst of relatives and friends, with no Indians to disturb, and peace and plenty around, he recalled and reflected upon the dangers and hardships through which he had passed, and resolved again to become a citizen of his native country. The scenes he had witnessed brought to his mind the uncertainty of life, and on the 21st of November he made his will, in the following words:

I, John Filson, of East Fallowfield Township, in Chester County, State of Pennsylvania, being in perfect health and sound memory, and calling to mind the mutability of my body, knowing it is appointed for all men once to die do constitute make and ordain this my last will and testament in manner and form following, viz. I first & principally commend my soul to God who gave it hoping to receive the same again at the general resurrection, my body I also commend to the care of Providence and the discretion of my friends or fellow creatures to be buried in a Christian like manner; and as to such worldly substance wherewith it hath pleased God to bless me I give and bequeath the whole and every part thereof both real and personal to my dear brother Robert Filson and his heirs forever; viz 500 acres of land in Jefferson county in Virginia and 1000 acres in the same county and State as will appear due from Squire Boone of said county upon two certain bonds to John Kephart which sd bonds were assigned to me; also all the property of the lands entered on Big Bone and Stepstone creeks as will appear by entries in Col Marshall's office in Fayette county

in Virginia aforesaid; also all the amount of bonds due to me in Kentucky and recovering by law as will appear by a list thereof in the hands of Capt James Patten my attorney at the Falls of Ohio; also all the amount of my property in Post St Vincent as will appear by a list of notes deeds etc in the hands of Col John Small my attorney in said town of St Vincent, hereby constituting and ordaining my brother Robert Filson aforesaid my true and lawful executor of all my estate both real and personal and by his discretion to be ordered as may be most just and equitable in every of my affairs wherewith he is or may be acquainted. In witness whereof I have to these presents set my hand and seal ordaining as aforesaid this to be my last will and testament and no other, hereby revoking and disannulling all other will or wills heretofore made by me this 21st day of November A D 1786.

JOHN FILSON.

(SEAL)

His Return to Kentucky Again.

After the life that Filson had lived in Kentucky, a quiet home among the farmers of the Brandywine was not endurable. The wild and stirring scenes of the border, with all their hardships and dangers, were preferable. Early in the year 1787 the great distance between Pennsylvania and Kentucky had again been crossed, and he was among the pioneers of the land whose history he had written and with whose destiny he had linked his own. But little is known of him for this year, however, except what has been gleaned from the records of courts. In the District Court, at Danville, he had a long suit against Robert Daniel, which was compromised by Dan-

iel's paying the debt and giving his obligation for the costs, which had become harder to pay than the original debt. Another suit had finally to be brought in Louisville for this bill of costs. At Stanford he had sued John K. Simpson, and gotten judgment for whatever sum he might prove at the next court to be due. This suit was also probably compromised, as no further proceedings have been found to have been taken in it. At Harrodsburg he sued John Morrison on a debt for one hundred and sixteen *livres and eight sous*, showing that it had been contracted among the French, at Post St. Vincent. Morrison could not be found for a long time, but finally he made his appearance in the neighborhood of Harrodsburg, and Filson accompanied the summons that went into the hands of Robert Patterson, the sheriff of Fayette County, with the following energetic note, copied *verbatim et literatim* from the original:

Mr. Patterson. You must execute this immediately the man is near Harrodsburg he is lately from Post St. Vincent a middle aged man. by strict enquiry you will hear of him. Delay no time Spare no search for him Yours
JOHN FILSON.

In this note we find the same want of punctuation and the same ill use of capital letters which characterize the writings of Filson. It is the only piece of his composition, however, which indicates the nervousness, the

impatience, and the dictatorial spirit which this one bears upon its face, addressed, as it was, to an officer of the law in the official discharge of his duty.

It would seem to us that a spirited man like Patterson, holding as important an office as that of sheriff of Fayette County in those days, would hardly have relished the reception of such a dictatorial note. It may be, however, that Filson was upon such terms of intimacy with Patterson as to justify this kind of a letter. It was not long after this transaction when Filson and Patterson entered into a contract with Denman for the establishing of a town on the site of Cincinnati, and tradition has represented them as having been great friends in their relations. Indeed it has been handed down to us that when Filson became involved in somewhat of an affair of honor in consequence of a peculiar letter which he published in the Kentucky Gazette about establishing a seminary at Lexington, Patterson was his adviser. A reply to Filson's letter by an anonymous writer was so witty and sarcastic that the town of Lexington was laughing at Filson, and Patterson advised him to demand the author's name and put him out of his humorous vein. The anonymous writer would not, however, be put out of his humor by giving his name, and so left Filson to get satisfaction as best he could. Probably these intimate relations between Filson

and Patterson induced Filson to write him such a letter as he would not have presumed under other circumstances, for his general character was that of exceeding politeness and affability.

Brown Sues Filson.

While Filson was suing others in 1787 he did not himself escape the pressure of the law. The obligation he had executed to John Brown, and of which a copy has heretofore been given, had not yet been liquidated. Brown could get neither the money nor the beaver-skins which the obligation bound Filson to pay. On his way to his old home in Pennsylvania the previous year Filson had written to Brown about this debt, and advised him to trade the note to George Caldwell or some one else, as he had more good will than money with which to pay it. The following is a *fac-simile* of Filson's letter, the original of which is in my possession, showing not only his handwriting, but such peculiarities of his style as beginning the words Friend and Harrod's Station with small letters, and delayed, creature—meaning his horse—and cash with capitals.

Danville Sep. 9 1806

Dear friend

I was Delayed, at Louisville,
by my Creature that left me
I hear you are gone to Cumberland
but if ever you receive this, I request
you to trade my note which will
be equal to Cash in the Neighbourhood
of Harrods Station which I can
ans. at my return M.^r Ge.
Baldwell will be a likely man to
trade with you, I have but little
Money, but my Will is good, therefore
you will excuse me from y.^r friend
John Wilson



Nothing but a Sickle to Make a Debt.

On the back of this letter Filson indorsed, "I expect to return before Christmas, farewell my friend adieu." But when he returned he still did not pay the note, and in September, 1787, Brown brought suit on it in Louisville. Strange to relate, when the execution issued on the judgment, nothing could be found belonging to Filson upon which to levy it. An attachment was issued to the county of Lincoln, and there levied on a sickle—not even a scythe or cradle for cutting grain, but an old-fashioned reaping-hook with teeth for biting off a handful at a time. As the ostensible owner of more than thirteen thousand acres of land in Kentucky, his finances must have been in a pitiable condition for him to have suffered suit on a note for sixty-one dollars, that had been due for more than a year, and then disclose no personal property out of which to make the debt, except an old rusty reaping-hook, that had possibly been sawing grain all over the country for years.

His Article in Favor of the Seminary.

In 1788 the six years in which Filson had been connected with affairs in Kentucky were brought to a sudden and tragical end. His last year in this region, however,

associated his name with matters scarcely less important than the publication of his book. On the 19th of January he published an article in the Kentucky Gazette in favor of establishing a seminary in Lexington, in which a liberal education could be procured. The manners and morals of the pupils were to be cared for as well as their mental culture, and the French language was to be a part of the curriculum. This article, however, was peculiar both in matter and manner, and what it indicated about the superiority of Northern teachers over Southern, and said about country boys having their manners and appearance polished by town influences and Northern teachers, was not well received. The article drew a very sarcastic reply from some one over the anonymous signature of "Agricola." Filson felt the satire, and not conceiving any better way of meeting it, wrote a short reply demanding the name of the author. The only answer that he got was a sarcastic paraphrase of his own note, again signed "Agricola." Whether "pistols and coffee for two," or parched corn and jerk for all who might want to engage in a "free for all" followed, does not appear; but both of the writers having survived the correspondence, it is not likely that either of their communications was stained with blood.

He is Foreman of the Jury in a Horse Suit.

On the 7th of March, 1788, at the trial in Louisville, Filson sat on the jury in the case of Floyd's executor against Pomeroy. As evidence of the position he held in society he was made foreman of this jury, composed of such prominent citizens as Benjamin Johnston, Richard Woolfolk, John Thruston, and Daniel Broadhead. The suit had been brought for the killing of a valuable race mare, under the following circumstances: A blooded mare belonging to Colonel John Floyd's estate was exceedingly fond of leaping fences and making visits to neighboring fields to crop the young grain when it was tender and sweet. She made her appearance in the rye-field of George Pomeroy, and was browsing away as if the rye had been raised especially for her. Pomeroy set his old cur dog upon her to chase her out of the field, and he was doing pretty good service, barking at her heels and biting at her tail, when a bulldog, belonging to a neighbor, came along and joined in the chase. This bulldog was famous for seizing cattle and horses by the nose and causing them to turn somersaults. He had not had a case for some time and was, no doubt, out that morning in search of one. So when he saw the old cur biting at the tail of

the mare he went straight for the nose, caught a death grip in the nostrils, darted back and pulled down the head of the animal with such violence that her heels flew over her head. As the mare fell her back came in contact with a log of wood, which broke it and killed her. The proof before the jury was clear that Pomeroy had set his own dog upon the mare to chase her out of a field not surrounded by a lawful fence, and that she had been killed in the chase. Most of the jurors had made up their minds to make Pomeroy pay for the mare before they retired, but when they got into their room Filson contended that it was not Pomeroy's dog that did the mischief, but a villainous old bulldog that got into the chase without being asked. After this suggestion, shrewd as an advocate if not learned as a lawyer, it was not long before Filson, as foreman of the jury, brought in a verdict for the defendant.

His Poetry on Beargrass Creek.

The last known act of Filson, in Louisville, was the writing of some verses, on the 30th of June, 1788. The manuscript was recently found by Americus Symmes, of the vicinity of Louisville, among the papers of his father, the famous author of the theory of the internal

habitation of the earth. It is possible that Filson, just before his death at Losantiville, may have left this paper with Judge Symmes, from whom it passed into the collection of his nephew, where it was found. Whether the lines were written by or for some love-sick youth, who really attempted to end his sorrows by a plunge in Beargrass, or whether the scene was one simply of the imagination, can not now be determined. At the foot of Second Street, in Louisville, an old tree thrown across Beargrass in early times served as a bridge, and went by the name of "lover's leap." It is possible that some such scene as is described in these verses may have given this name to this bridge. There is nothing in the verses to impart poetic fame to Filson or any one else, but found, as they were, in the handwriting of Filson, they become a necessary part of his memoirs. The following is a copy from the original in my possession:

WRITTEN AT BEARGRASS 30TH JUNE, 1788.

Adieu ye limpid streams and cooling shades,
Adieu ye groves, ye meadows, fields and meads,
Adieu to all this scene and yon green bowers,
Adieu to sweets and all this field of flowers;
Adieu ye warbling train in every grove,
Adieu, awhile, to all on earth but love.
Adieu the sounding harp and cheerful lute

Adieu the viol bass or german flute.
Adieu these rural scenes that once could please,
Adieu to every joy and to my ease.
Adieu most merry dances on the green,
Adieu those blithesome hours I once have seen.
Adieu to every joy which time invades,
Adieu ye faithful swains and beauteous maids.
Adieu Amanda who my soul ensnares,
Adieu till fate this mortal wound repairs.
Adieu my peace, the busy world farewell,
Adieu to all but plains of Asphodel.
Farewell yon mountains—brow and all the plain;
One leap in yonder gulf shall end my pain.
Then to Elysium fields I'll wing my way,
Through dreary wastes to reach perpetual day,
There with happy souls I'll careless rove
And in their realms forget the pains of love.

His Fatal Contract with Denman and Patterson.

It was not long after Filson wrote these verses when he left Louisville for Lexington, never more to return. His restless mind, ever grasping for things new, was soon to be gratified with the grandest of his schemes. In August, 1788, his opportunity came, and he entered into a contract with Matthias Denman and Robert Patterson, which, though grand, was destined to cost him his life. Denman, a citizen of New Jersey, had by contract with Judge Symmes secured a right to about eight hundred acres of

land on the high bank of the Ohio River opposite to the mouth of the Licking, which he believed to be a good site for a town. He wanted partners to help him lay out the town and people it, and thus increase the value of his property. Patterson, a brave soldier and popular citizen of Kentucky, could bring settlers to the new town; and Filson, a surveyor and author of a popular history of the same State, could lay out the town and make known to the world its merits by publishing articles about it. These were the kind of partners that Denman wanted, and when they got together and talked the matter over they soon came to an understanding. Denman sold to Patterson and Filson each an undivided third of his land, and, retaining the remaining third himself, the three became tenants in common of the original site of the present city of Cincinnati. The following is a copy of their contract from an old manuscript in my possession:

Covenant with reference to Logansville.

A covenant and agreement made and concluded this 25th day of August 1788, between Matthias Denman of Essex County New Jersey State of the one part and Robert Patterson and John Filson of Lexington in Fayette County, Kentucky of the other part witnesseth; that the said Matthias Denman having made entry of a tract of land on the north west side of Ohio river opposite the mouth of Licking river, in that district in which Judge Symmes has purchased from Congress and being seized thereof by right of entry to contain 640 acres

and the fractional parts that may pertain, do grant bargain and sell the full two thirds thereof by an equal undivided right in partnership with the said Robert Patterson and John Filson their heirs and assigns; and upon producing indisputable testimony of his the said Denman's right and title to the said premises they the said Patterson and Filson shall pay the sum of £20 Virginia currency to the said Denman or his heirs or assigns as full remittance for moneys by him advanced in pay of said lands, every other institution, determination, and regulation respecting the laying off a town and establishing a ferry at and upon the premises to be the result of the united advice and consent of the parties in covenant aforesaid; and by these presents the parties bind themselves for the true performance of these covenants to each other in the penal sum of £1000 specie, hereunto affixing their hands and seals the day and year above written.

Signed sealed and delivered in
the presence of
HENRY OWEN
ABR McCONNELL

MATTHIAS DENMAN
R. PATTERSON
JOHN FILSON

At the date of this contract the people of the United Colonies had not arrived at the blessing of a uniform or national currency. The coins of Spain, France, and Germany were in circulation, as well as those of England, and the confusion was great. The English pound and shilling had one value, in the dollars and cents of this country, in the New England States, another value in New York, another in Pennsylvania, another in Carolina, and another in New Jersey. Hence a contract like this between the citizens of different States had to specify the State whose standard was to give value to the money employed. The

English pound in Virginia was then equal to \$3.33⅓ cents, and the shilling 16⅔ cents. Hence the price to be paid by Patterson and Filson for the two-thirds of the six hundred and forty acres and the fractions that pertained, all of which amounted to about eight hundred acres, was \$66.66⅔—cheap enough, it would seem, especially when contrasted with the millions that ground is now worth. It is possible that the character and efficiency of his partners for the work of establishing the contemplated town, and thus rendering the whole property more valuable, was estimated at considerable in addition to the low price put upon the land.

Prospectus of Cosantiville.

On the 30th of August, 1788, they had agreed upon a plan of operations, and published in the Kentucky Gazette the following prospectus, evidently written by Filson:

The subscribers being proprietors of a tract of land opposite the mouth of the Licking river, on the north west side of Ohio, have determined to lay off a town upon that excellent situation. The local and natural advantages speak its future prosperity, being equal if not superior to any on the bank of Ohio between the Miamis. The in-lots to be each half an acre, the out-lots four acres, thirty of each to be given to settlers upon paying one dollar and fifty cents for the survey and deed of each lot. The fifteenth day of September is appointed for a large company to meet in Lexington and mark a road from thence to the mouth of Licking, provided Judge Symmes arrives, being daily expected.

When the town is laid off lots will be given to such as may become residents before the first of April next.

MATHIAS DENMAN
ROBERT PATTERSON
JOHN FILSON

The Name of Filson's Town.

Having thus matured their plans and platted on paper their town of Losantiville and published their programme, the next thing to be done was to meet on the site and lay off the town on the ground itself. The wonder is that familiarity with the location on the bank of the Ohio, with the Little Miami above, the Great Miami below, and the Licking opposite, a name was not invented for the contemplated town meaning the city of four rivers, instead of opposite the mouth of one of them. I must not be understood, however, as objecting to the name of Losantiville for this reason, nor for the reasons assigned by others. To my ear Losantiville is quite as musical as Cincinnati, and not a syllable longer. The meaning of the name, too, is quite as appropriate as any that can be derived from the Roman farmer or the society formed by the leaders of our armies at the close of the Revolution. If an analysis of the word leads any one to the conclusion that it

is pedagogical, then let him avoid separating it into parts and take it as a concatenation of euphonious syllables, making a musical whole. The last historian of Cincinnati, while sporting with a pedantry that could produce such a name, himself falls into a show of learning by calling it "an eccentric polyglot neologism"; and the charming McMaster improves upon the grim humor of our own Collins, who hoped that the name "had no connection with his early death," by stating that a few weeks after coining the name "the Indians scalped him." Instead of thus ridiculing the school-master for inventing the name of Losantiville, his critics would have been no worse employed in deeming him a prophet who cast the eye of the seer far down the course of time, and seeing the grand Hall of sweet sounds in the Queen City of another century, gave to the incipient town a corresponding musical name. No one with "an ear for the concord of sweet sounds" will risk his reputation by saying that Cincinnati is more musical than Losantiville.

Change of Time in Starting.

According to the prospectus, a large party was to set out on the 15th of September, to go from Lexington to the mouth of the Licking and mark out a road on the

journey. But before the 15th of September arrived, word came from Limestone that Judge Symmes would meet the party at the mouth of the Licking on the 22d, and therefore the day of starting from Lexington was changed by the following notice, which appeared in the Kentucky Gazette on the 13th:

N. B. The time appointed to go to the mouth of Licking is put off from the 15th as published last week to the 18th inst, when a large party will start from Lexington in order to meet Judge Symmes on Monday the 22d at that place agreeable to his own appointment and the business will then go on as proposed.

R. PATTERSON

Filson's Road to Cosantiville.

This notice in the Gazette of the 13th, postponing the time of leaving Lexington for the mouth of the Licking, is signed by Patterson alone, and nothing is said in it specifically about marking out a road between these points. There was a reason for Denman and Filson not having signed this notice, as they had the contract and prospectus, and that reason is supplied by their absence from Lexington on the 13th, when the notice appeared in the Gazette. Denman had gone back to Limestone to meet Judge Symmes, but where was Filson? Tradition says that he was in the woods with his compass determining the course the new road was to take, while Patterson was

collecting the party to go over it. Filson determined the line of this road, and Isaac Taylor and his woodsmen marked it upon the trees. His anxiety to get to the site of his Losantiville and begin the work of laying out its streets and lots put him upon this road as early as possible. The determining of this new road from Lexington to the mouth of the Licking was not as easy a matter when it was first done by Filson as it would now appear. The wilderness to be gone through had been traversed by no roads except that over which Colonel Byrd led his murderers against Ruddle's and Martin's stations in 1780, and that over which the avenging soldiers of General Clark had swept like an angry whirlwind soon afterward. Byrd had moved up the Licking and Clark down the Kentucky from Leestown to the mouth of Eagle Creek, and thence across the country to the mouth of the Licking. Filson, with a knowledge of the country that suggested a route better than either of these and the genius of an engineer to determine it, started from Lexington on a course almost north through Georgetown, then known as the Royal Spring, McLellan's Station, or Lebanon, and following the ridge that divided the waters flowing into the Licking from those that ran to the Kentucky and Ohio, reached the mouth of the Licking in almost a straight line. Modern engineering has not improved upon

the line of road thus marked out by Filson through the original forest, and for the simple reason that it was the best that could be selected. The Kentucky Central Railroad in an evil hour ignored it for the winding way of the valley of the Licking, but the Cincinnati Southern adopted it as the best route between Lexington and the mouth of the Licking, and now sends its locomotives thundering along the path over which Filson led his Losantiville adventurers ninety-six years ago.

Laying Out Losantiville.

It may never be known to what extent Filson succeeded in the laying out of his Losantiville after he reached its site in September, 1788. In 1811, Judge Burnet, as attorney for the heirs of Israel Ludlow, brought suit in Cincinnati against John Kidd and Joel Williams for Lot No. 401. In the petition the cunning attorney adroitly avoided any mention of the name of Filson or the town of Losantiville, and made Cincinnati begin with its own name under the plan of Ludlow, who had been thrust into Filson's place after his death. But Filson and Losantiville were not such unsubstantial things as thus to be kept out of the Temple of Justice by the subtle plea of the lawyer in behalf of his clients. They

were real things of the past, matters of history too indelibly impressed upon the memories of the living to be thus annihilated for the benefit of those whose interest it was to have them no more. In the answer of the defendants and in the depositions taken on both sides, the town of Losantiville loomed up like a thing of life in advance of Cincinnati and on its site, and guilty consciences might have seen wandering through its deserted streets the melancholy specter of Filson, murdered by his red enemies and despoiled by his white friends. The answer filed in this suit by E. Glover, as attorney for Kidd and Williams, and the proof taken by both plaintiffs and defendants, made and perpetuated an issue of fact as to what Filson did or did not in the laying out of Losantiville, each side of which may always have its advocates. The dead Filson had been despoiled of his estate in Cincinnati, and it was the interest of the spoilers to blot out his name and his works from everything that could tell against them. Robert Patterson, one of the original proprietors of Losantiville and partners of Filson, deposed that the plan of a town to be called Losantiville was agreed upon, but before it was laid out on the ground Filson was killed by the Indians. On the contrary, Joel Williams, one of the first lot-owners in Cincinnati, stated in his answer that on or about the 22d of September, 1788,

John Filson landed upon the ground, and that on the following day he was surveying some of the lines and streets of Losantiville, whose location he fixed as they afterwards remained when the name was changed to Cincinnati. Patterson and Williams are here referred to only as representative men, for there were other witnesses who testified in unison with each of them. They were both intelligent and credible citizens testifying as to a fact about which we should think them both too familiar for doubt, and yet their statements are diametrically opposed. If they could differ so widely as to what they learned in the very shadow of its occurrence, how are we, so far removed by time, to reconcile their statements or say which was right?

His Disappearance in the Miami Woods.

Filson went on the ground opposite to the mouth of the Licking, with his compass and chain, for the purpose of laying off his Losantiville; and there is no conclusive reason why he should not have run some of the lines and streets, as Williams says he did. He has come down to us in tradition as having laid out a town called Losantiville on the site of Cincinnati; and while there is no good reason for supposing that a complete survey of

the town was made by him in the short interval between his reaching the site and losing his life, a generous concession to a life sacrificed in the act would allow him to have done even more than Williams says he did. There was a difficulty in more than a rudimental survey at the time, which arose from a want of precise knowledge as to the external lines of section eighteen and fractional section seventeen, on which the town was to be laid out. It was known that the lands pre-empted by Denman lay opposite to the mouth of the Licking, and this was definite enough for Eastern Row, now Broadway, to take its place immediately opposite to the mouth of the Licking, and eight parallel streets to follow in a westerly direction to Western Row, now Central Avenue—this being the direction from which the townships were to be ranged from the Great Miami. Possibly, while making these limited surveys in the midst of the doubts of external boundary, Judge Symmes arrived from Limestone, and with a view to determine, among other things, how far east of the Great Miami the western line of the Losantiville lands should begin, Filson joined the Symmes party in an exploring and surveying expedition to the Great Miami. In this excursion, after the country had been explored as high as the upper line of the fifth range of townships, Filson separated from his companions,

disappeared in the woods, and was never seen more. Hostile Indians were then lurking in the woods, and it was assumed that he had fallen beneath the stroke of the tomahawk or been pierced by the ball of a savage. His remains were never found, and none of his clothes or papers were ever recovered. No reports ever came from any of the Indian tribes that he had been either killed or captured by them. Numerous searches were made for his skeleton as the lapse of time deepened the melancholy tints of his fate, but none of his bones were ever found. The insidious panther, crouched amid the overhanging boughs, may have sprung upon him, or the surly bear have crushed him within its terrible embrace; the deadly crotalus may have sent fatal poison into his veins, or his own worn-out heart may have suddenly ceased to beat. Among the mighty sycamores and great maples of the valley of the Miami he took his departure from his companions, and these silent witnesses have told no story of the manner of his going.

Records of Filson's Death.

In the possession of Robert Clarke, of Cincinnati, is an old Dilworth's Arithmetic which once belonged to Filson and which served the purposes of many books

in his hands. When he was in Louisville the scarcity of books of this kind made it necessary for him to make copies of parts of it for the use of others. Among the papers of the sheriff of Jefferson County for 1785 was found a manuscript in the handwriting of Filson, which I now have, giving the rules and examples of Dilworth for adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing vulgar fractions, for calculating interest, etc. Filson gave this arithmetic to his brother Robert, whom he made the sole devisee and executor of his will, and who after his death wrote on its last page the following memorial: "THIS BOOK WAS GIVEN TO ME BY MY BROTHER, JOHN FILSON, WHO WAS KILLED BY AN INDIAN ON THE NORTH SIDE OF THE OHIO, OCTOBER THE FIRST, 1788, ABOUT FIVE MILES FROM THE GREAT MIAMI RIVER AND 20 OR 25 FROM THE OHIO." Robert Filson came to Kentucky early in the year 1789, and from those who were familiar with the circumstances learned the fact thus recorded. With a single exception it is the earliest known record of the sad event, and thus recorded by a loving hand with all the probabilities in its favor it should be accepted as the truth. Joseph Buell, a sergeant stationed at Fort Harmar, in 1788 in his journal, published in Hildreth's *Pioneer History*, noted in October of that year that one of the surveyors of Judge Symmes had been killed by the Indians. The surveyor

thus alluded to was without doubt John Filson, and this was the earliest known record of the event. In the suits of Cincinnati against Joel Williams in 1803, and Ludlow's heirs against Kidd and Williams in 1811, it was stated in depositions under oath and in pleadings sworn to by the litigants, that Filson had been killed by the Indians in September or October, 1788, and such has been the unbroken chain of accepted evidence.

Death at Ungrateful Hands.

And yet Filson, though full of premonitions, had not expected to die in that way. In his history of Kentucky he had traced the origin of the Indians from the wilds of Asia, across Bering Strait, to their home in the new world, and had enumerated and located their tribes, with many kind words and few harsh ones about their mode of life. In none of the wars of the English against the Indians has the name of John Filson been found among those who, in the name of civilization and Christianity, drove the red men from their ancestral hunting-grounds and appropriated their lands to their own use. He looked upon them as of the great family of humanity, and, though groping their way in the darkness of ignorance and barbarism, yet human beings. When he was attacked by them

on the Wabash, and had to flee for his life, he deemed his escape an "interposition of heaven" that had preserved him for a valuable purpose. Alas! that miraculous preservation was but to afford an opportunity for him to fall at their hands at another time and place, when no friendly help was near and no kind eye could see the final struggle. In his will he had commended his soul to Him who gave it, and his body to his "fellow creatures, to be buried in a Christian-like manner"; but he had no Christian pall nor funeral anthem. In the loneliness of the wild woods of the Miami the shadows of the great trees were his winding-sheet, and the melancholy winds which sighed through their pitying branches his requiem. No little mound attracts to his last resting-place, and no inscription tells of his deeds; but he will live, in his map of Kentucky and in his narrative of Boone, when others, laid beneath marble columns surmounted by brazen epitaphs, are remembered no more.

Poems about Filson.

There was poetry in the death-scene of Filson, in the midst of the awful solitude of the "forest primeval," solemn with autumn's "sere and yellow leaf"; but only two of our poets with whose verses I am familiar have remem-

bered the event. W. D. Gallagher, who had laid the scene of his most elaborate poem in the "Miami Woods," could hardly have failed to note the death of Filson there. I have the manuscript of two unpublished stanzas he wrote about Filson, which are as follows:

SHADOWS.

I.

Among the mist-dimmed memories
That from the past come down,
Is one of the brave John Filson
And his survey for a town.
Oh! how he felt his bosom
With emotions throb and thrill
As, asleep or awake, in his dreamings
He beheld Losantiville!
And down between the Miamis,
With his compass and his chain,
How he marked the ways of the Future,
Which the Future sought in vain.
Well has it been said, "What shadows
We are, and what shadows pursue."
Now we see them—and now we miss them—
Forever, yet never in view.

II.

In the vigor of life, with a spirit
That shrank from no duty imposed,
John Filson's career as surveyor
Between the Miamis closed.

If pierced with an Indian arrow,
Or if with a tomahawk slain,
Or else, none knew, for the wild woods
Were searched for him often in vain.
To his memory, in Cincinnati,
On a street was conferr'd his name;
But e'en this was a fleeting tribute,
For ere long a shadow came,
(As shadow and shadow and shadow
Forever and ever will come),
And the brave and adventurous FILSON
Became and remained but a Plum.

The statement in the last line of Mr. Gallagher's verses, that Filson became and remained but a *Plum*, is in allusion to the street named after him in Losantiville, which became *Plum* Street when Losantiville became Cincinnati. The other poet who forgot not Filson was Prof. W. H. Venable, whose ballad, published in his "June on the Miami, and other Poems," in 1877, is given in the supplement to this article.

Pillaged after Death.

So soon as death had put Filson out of the way those harpies that feed upon dead men's estates began their loathsome repast. His solemn contract, written, signed,

sealed, and delivered with all the formalities of the binding law, for one-third of the ground on which the great city of Cincinnati was afterward built, was set aside by his partners as if they had been the only objects of protecting law, and all the rights of their dead equal had perished with him. His partners assumed that as he had paid no money on the contract and could render no services in death, his interest reverted to Denman; but we look in vain for any such conditions of forfeiture in the contract itself. Instead of sorrow for his tragical end and sympathy for his surviving representatives manifesting themselves in something like a show of justice, his inheritance was seized by a cold avarice scarcely less savage than the hand that had taken his life. It is probable that those who robbed him of his estate in Losantiville really thought that death was an end of his covenant, and that they would have shrunk from the wrong they did if they had fully comprehended it; for their character in other things in life comports not with this act. In the suit of Ludlow's heirs against Kidd and Williams, heretofore referred to, it was stated and sworn to in the answer of the defendants that after Filson's death his trunks were ransacked and his papers destroyed for the purpose of vesting in another his interest in the Losantiville lands. After his death his share of these lands was transferred

to Israel Ludlow and away from his heirs forever without consulting, at the time of transfer, the living representative any more than the dead proprietor. I am aware of the statement in the history of Cincinnati published by Mr. and Mrs. Ford in 1781 to the effect that a brother of John Filson was with the party of Kentuckians when he was killed, and that he informed the surviving partners that no claim would be set up by his legal representatives for his interest in the Losantiville venture. In my search for information concerning Filson, which has neither been short in time nor circumscribed in extent, I have found nothing to make me favor this statement in the Cincinnati history, while I have come upon much to make me doubt its truth. There was but one brother of Filson who could have given his surviving partners any such assurance, and that was Robert Filson, the sole devisee and executor of his will. On the 28th of November, 1788, Robert Filson was in Chester County, Pennsylvania, where he had proven in court the will of his dead brother, and did not make his appearance in the West until the following year. He spent much of his time in Louisville, and owned a little farm of one hundred and twenty-five acres on Beech Creek, in Jefferson County, which he purchased of Benjamin Roberts. When he reached this region in 1789, he found Ludlow in possession of his dead brother's

interest in Losantiville, with the strong arms of Patterson and Denman ready to support him. As the prospect of ousting the usurper may not have seemed favorable, nor the property itself in its wild state been deemed of sufficient value to justify a contest for its recovery, it is not strange that the executor and devisee should have succumbed to the situation as he found it. He has, however, been handed down to us by old citizens who knew him well as entertaining any but an approving view of the manner in which Ludlow got possession of his brother's interest in Losantiville. He was not given to swearing, but was reported by Gabriel J. Johnston, an early member of the Louisville bar, to have said of this transaction that no matter how it might be regarded in the Northwest Territory, it would be "counted dinged nigh robbin' in Pennsilvany."

It is possible that the placing of a brother of Filson in the company of the Kentuckians at the time of his death, and making him disclaim any interest in Losantiville before Denman and Patterson took in Ludlow, as stated in the history of Cincinnati, came of a misinterpretation of the language used by Robert Patterson in his deposition in the case of the city of Cincinnati against Joel Williams in 1803. Some notes which I have from the papers in this suit do not make Patterson say that a

brother of Filson was present, and thus acted at or immediately after his death. He does say, however, that a brother of Filson told him that as no money had been paid upon the purchase, no claim would be made for the interest of his dead brother. Patterson, however, does not fix the time when he was told this by the brother of Filson, so as to shut out the inference that it was after Ludlow had been accepted by him and Denman in the place of Filson. All the probabilities are in favor of Patterson's having been told this by Filson's brother after Ludlow had been accepted in the place of the dead partner; for if it had been otherwise Patterson would most likely have fixed the date of his getting this assurance before the arrangement with Ludlow, and distinctly have so stated it.

On account of the burning of the early records of Vincennes, Ind., I have not been able to ascertain what became of Filson's lands in that region. In Kentucky, where he supposed he had laid the foundation of a large fortune in lands, his evil genius seems to have hovered over him in life and to have pursued his representatives after him. The subtleties of the law, which had been invoked by astute attorneys to get rid of the loose entries of the unsuspecting and careless pioneers in the books of the surveyors, bore heavily and disastrously upon the entries of Filson. All over the district warrant had been laid

upon warrant until in many places, where the lands were exceptionally good, they were three or four-fold deep; and in the merciless scramble of one for another's lands, the titles of Filson, without his presence to explain and enforce them, were swept away like chaff before the whirlwind. In the county of Jefferson I have not been able to find that any deeds ever passed for the 1,500 acres he had bought of Squire Boone; and in Fayette the 12,368½ acres he had entered in the books of the surveyor do not seem to have brought to his devisee anything more than the poverty with which they afflicted Filson in his lifetime. When Filson's executor settled his estate in Kentucky and made his returns to the office from which letters of administration had been granted, his accounts showed that he had paid out in litigation and otherwise the sum of £280 6s. 7d. more than he had received as assets. What a financial ending for the holder of 13,873½ acres of land in Kentucky, and one-third of the site on which the great city of Cincinnati was reared!

Nothing Named after Filson.

In the year 1802 Joel Williams, in compliance with the territorial law requiring it, filed in the register's office of Hamilton County a plat of "the town of Cincinnati, for-

merly called Losantiville." On this plat the present Plum Street of Cincinnati was laid down by the name of Filson Street. The same day, however, and at an earlier hour of that day, Israel Ludlow filed for record another plat of the town, on which there was no Filson Street, but on which the present Plum Street, which took the place of the Filson Street on the plat of Williams, was spelled Plumb—not so designed, of course, but nevertheless indicating the leaden line of policy by which the very name of Filson was to be obliterated from the new town. Each of the parties claimed that the plat he filed represented the original town; and if Williams' was an original, it was the wish of Filson that his name should be perpetuated in one of the streets of the town he had projected. If such was his hope, however, it was based on a supposed sense of justice in his associates and successors that was destined to a disappointment as ungrateful as the savage hand which deprived him of his life.

Patterson and Denman, the partners of Filson, who were out of danger when he lost his life, have been honored with two streets named after each of them; and Ludlow, who succeeded to the estate and the office which had cost Filson his life, has been honored by a bountiful nomenclature, with a street, an avenue, and an alley named after him. But what has the Queen City, the successor of

Losantiville, done for Filson, who first planted the Jacob staff upon her foundation, and sighted the first lines of her streets through the dense woods that covered it? Not even a hovelled alley, much less a business-bound street or palaced avenue, bears his name. Nothing has been done but ignore him, and worse than that, erase his name from a street that already bore it. If misfortune ever pursued the projector of a great city—in his name, in his property, and in his life—that projector was John Filson.

Cincinnati, however, has been no more unmindful of one of her founders than Kentucky has of her first historian and cartographer. Of all the rivers and creeks, mountains and hills, plains and valleys, counties and towns in Kentucky, not one is named after him who first described the country and recorded its early annals. Even of our blooded stock, for the names of which the heavens, the earth and the waters are searched from year to year, not one owner has thought of the name of Filson. He came upon our pioneer stage, played his part amid deserved plaudits, and disappeared behind the curtain never more to be recalled. Our Club has been the first to recognize the debt of gratitude that posterity owes him, by taking to itself the name of Filson, and it is to be hoped that the good example thus set may find imitators.

Likeness of Filson.

Unlike the gifted Macaulay, who, to excite new interest in his renowned subject, began his brilliant essay on the great Milton with an account of his long-lost and recently-found Latin work on Christian doctrine, I have reserved for the last a more humble book that once belonged to the less famous Filson, and which has become his chief relic by preserving his likeness and bringing it down to our times. It is an old-fashioned leather-bound volume of three hundred and sixteen small octavo pages, printed in London, in 1754, with the following quaint title-page:

"Admonitions from the dead in epistles to the living addressed by certain spirits of both sexes to their friends or enemies on earth with a view either to condemn or justify their conduct while alive and to promote the cause of religion and moral virtue."

There are evidences in the wear and tear of this book that it was read by the owner. Some of the epistles, and especially that horrid one written by Miss Keppel from the spirit world and giving her mother an account of the treatment of her dead body in the dissecting-room, bear marks of having been read. So does the letter of Madame Maintenon to Voltaire, that of Archbishop Tillotson

to a late bishop, and that of the Duke of Buckingham to his mother. What Filson found to admire in these strangely conceived and not remarkably well executed epistles from the dead to the living I shall not attempt to determine, but the book was evidently a favorite of his. On the front fly-leaf is a miniature likeness of Filson, possibly drawn by himself with a pen, and preserved from injury by the accidental adhering of the leaf to the back of the book with the picture side folded under. Immediately beneath the picture is the signature of Filson, evidently written by himself, as it corresponds with his name to legal documents known to have been subscribed by him.

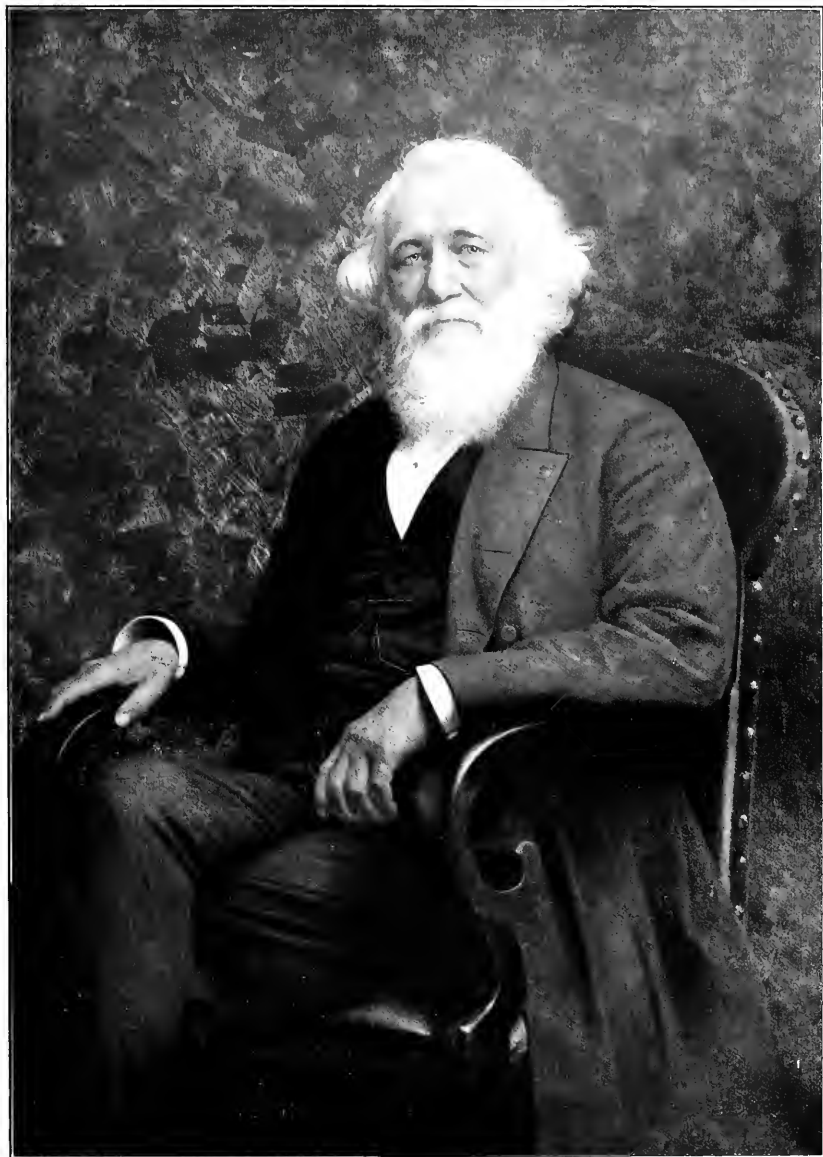
When Filson was in Louisville he usually stayed at the house of Captain James Patten, whom he mentions in his will as his attorney at the Falls of the Ohio. Filson left this book at the house of Captain Patten, and after his death it began its wanderings to the book-shelves of other owners. William Marshall, who obtained it by intermarriage with the widow of Captain Patten, transferred it to Dr. Charles Caldwell, after whose death it came to me from his estimable widow, who afterward married Judge Hunter and now resides at her country seat on the Bardstown Road in the vicinity of Louisville. It is not likely that it will again change ownership during the remaining few years that may be allotted to the present owner.

Filson has not been flattered in the likeness by a face that would be pronounced either handsome or prepossessing. It is about as melancholy a countenance as one would find in a long search among the votaries of *Il Penseroso*. Beneath an ample forehead, broad enough and high enough for intellect of no ordinary degree, are thoughtful if not dreamy eyes, a snub nose decisively marked, and a large mouth that would seem to sternly say it were a sin to smile. He appears bound up in the superabundant cravat, high-buttoned vest, and full collared coat of the era preceding the French Revolution, and looks as uncomfortable as a martyr to that fashion need have been. The likeness was evidently taken in his Sunday clothes, and tradition has said of him that he was exceedingly particular as to his dress and personal appearance. When he was in the woods he wore the homely costume of the early hunters, but when he listened to the three-or-four-hour sermon of a pioneer preacher, or attended the evening dance of the neighborhood, or sat at the dinner-table of "one of the quality" of the times, he was the seemingly suffering victim of the precise habiliments in which he was bound. He would be called a dandy in our day if arrayed for our times as he was for his. On the whole, while the picture does not represent him to have been as handsome or genial as we would have had the first

historian of Kentucky, we can not say that it is not the likeness of just such a man as would have written what Filson wrote and done what Filson did during the six short years that he was in this region. An exact copy of this likeness, from a plate, engraved for the purpose, forms the frontispiece to this article; and if, in this attempt to collect and preserve information concerning him whose image the picture preserves, I have rescued from oblivion any facts that ought not to have perished, and directed the attention of those whom it may concern to a worthy author too long neglected, the full measure of my wishes will have been accomplished, and I shall regard the effort as a fitting commemoration of the one hundredth anniversary of the publication of his history and his map of Kentucky.

APPENDIX.





COLONEL R. T. DURRETT

PRESIDENT OF THE FILSON CLUB SINCE ORGANIZATION



APPENDIX.

WILL OF JOHN FILSON.

The following is a copy of the will of John Filson, the grandfather of the author of the first history and map of Kentucky. It is taken from the original at Westchester, Penn., where it was proven in court and ordered to record April 29, 1751. I have not felt at liberty to correct the spelling, the grammar, nor any other error, however apparent, but give the document as I find it, with whatever faults of composition it may have:

I John Felson of Fallowfield Township in Chester County, Pennsylvania, being very sick and Weack in body, but of sound and disposing mind and memory, Do make and ordain this my last Will and Testament, that is to say, principally and first of all I give and renounce mye Soul, into the hand of God, that gave it, and for my Body I recommend it to the Earth to be Buried in a Christian Like and decent mannor at the discretion of Executors, and as touching such worldly Estate, wherewith it hath pleased God to bless me in this life, I give, devise and dispose of the same in the following mannor and form, My will is, that first of all my debts and funerall Charges be paid and Satisfied:

Imprimis: I give and Bequeath unto Jane my Beloved wife one half of my new dwelling house which part shee shall think proper, and her bed and bedding, and such further furniture in the house as shee shall have need of, and Likewise a sufficient of Breas meal, for her own use, and two Cows and a Rising horse, and their keeping Winter and Summer one the plantation I now dwell one at the praper Cost and Charges of my son Davison, and Likewise, fire wood Cut and brought to the dore sufficient for one fire at my son's cost, which privilege, she shall enjoy duriing her naturall life, and at her deceased, what she Leaves shall be given to my son Davison to his only proper use forever.

Item: I give to my beloved Son Davison whome with my son John. I constitute my executor of this my Last Will and Testament, all and singular the Lands Messuages and Tenements, by him freely to be posessed and enjoyed by him his heirs and assigns forever, being the place whereone I now dwell, Containing by Estimation two hundred acres be it more or less, But in Case he should without Issue, then the said Messuage or Plantation shall be sold, and the value of it shall be Euqually divided to all my Children, except my wife's priviledge which shall still remain to her as aforesaid.

Item: I give to my son William Felson Ten Shillings to be Levied out of my Estate.

Item: I give to my daughter Margaret two cows.

Item: I give Martha Peoples, a two year old heifer, if she remain in my house at my death.

Item: I give to my three Grandsons John, and two Robert Felsons each of them a pocet bible, to be procured by my executors.

Item: My will is that after all my debts and funerall Charges, be paid and satisfied, with those above mentioned Legacies, that the rest of my personall Estate shall be Equally divided between my two sons John, and Davison part and share alike, John paying his Mother three pounds a year, Yearly and every year dureing her naturall life, if demanded. And I doe Constitute and ordain John Filson and Davison Felson, to be my Executors of this my Last will and

Appendix.

III

Testament Utterly disallowing and revoking all and every other Wills Testaments, Legacies and executors by me in any way before this time named. Willed and Bequeathed, Ratifying and confirming this and no other to be my Last Will and Testament.

In Witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal this 3rd day of September in the year 1748.

JOHN FELSON. [SEAL]

WILL OF DAVISON FILSON.

The following is an exact copy of the last will and testament of Davison Filson, the father of the first historian and cartographer of Kentucky. The original is on file at Westchester, Pennsylvania, where it was proven in court and ordered to be recorded August 23, 1776. As in the case of his father's will, I have made no alterations, but given the bad spelling, bad grammar, etc., as I found them. Testators in dying conditions don't have much thought about the elegance of composition, and all of them can't attain it even if it enters their thoughts; but it should be borne in mind by those who undertake to improve upon the general distribution of estates as made by law, that some regard should be paid to the English language as well as other things. The law makes a very good will and does it in good English,

and those who undertake to make a better should not do so by violating the ordinary rules of the spelling-book and grammar:

In the naim of God Amen the seckeent day of August in the year 1776 I Davison Filson of Eaist Follofild in Chester County and Province of Pencelvania, yeoman, being weak in Boddey but of sound mind & memory do make this my last Will & Testament in manner Following—

Imprimes: I Bequeath my soul to God who gave it, & my body to the dust to be decently Interred at the discretion of my Excu's:

Itim: after payment of all my just debtes and Funerall expences, I Bequeath to my beloved Wife Agness Filson hir Bed and Bed clothes, with one hors and saddle and one Cow—

Itime: I Bequeath unto my beloved son John Filson two Cows out of my Esteat—along with the Land he gat by deed from me and no more, onley the two first Bonds he give me for the Land, is to be forgiven him, which is Fiftey Pounds, and the next Fiftey Pounds my son John is to pay it to my two doughters, Ann Filson & Ellenor Filson when their com of age, which will be Twenty-five Pounds to ech of them —

Itime: I alow my beloved doughter Ann Filson the Bed & Bead-Cloths in the Beack Room—

Itime: I alow my beloved doughter Elenor Filson the Chist of draers in the Beack Room—

Itim: I alow Ann Filson & Elenor Filson ech of them one Cow and two yous out of my Esteate—

Itime: I Bequeath unto my beloved son Robert Filson one Bead and one Cow, and his pick of one Hors out of my Esteat along with his Land I mead him by Leas and no more.

Itim: I alow the pleave I bought of William Filson to be sold all but the Fiftey acors I made over to my son Robert Filson to pay the debt that is upon it and the remender of it to be equely devided between my doughter Ann Filson,

Elenor Filson, Mosis Filson, Jean Filson, Elisabeth Filson, & the last one bourn and not named ase yeat and the mother to have hir shear of the saim

Itim: After all my just debts and Legocys before menched be paid & settesfyed. I alow that the remender of my parsenal esteat be sold and equely be devided between my beloved wife & Ann Filson Elenor Filson, Mosis Filson Jean Filson Elisabeth Filson and the last bourn Child on named part and shear alike—

Itim: I alow my wif to live with my son Robert one year after my death and no more—without the cean agray longer.

Itim: I alow my son Mosis to go to a tread—

Finally, I apoint and ordain my son—John Filson and my son Robert Filson to rase keep and mintan and scool my two doughters Jean Filson and Elisabeth Filson till the are of age.

Itim: I confes the Land I bought of James Harlen is to be Bettey Ring's after she pays John Pasmore the money he hes against mee—

Finaly, I apoint & ordain my beloved son Robert Filson and my beloved frend William Grant to be the executers of this my last Will and Testament, Revoking & disinuling aney other person or persons from having aney Right by birthrit and all other Wills and Testaments by me heretofore made and published Ratifing this ase my last Will ase Witness my hand and sail the day and year above ritten.

DAVISON FILSON. [SEAL.]

ENTRY OF FIVE THOUSAND ACRES OF LAND.

The following is a copy of the first land entry made by John Filson in the register of Col. Thomas Marshall, surveyor of Fayette County, Ky.:

John Filson assee of Clem Moore Enteres 5000 acres of Land on part of a Treasury Warrant No 19606 lying on the waters of ohio and about 10 or 11 miles Eastward of the big Bone Lick. Beginning at the northeastward corner of an Entry made in the name of Benjamin Netherland for 7000 acres and running north with the lines of older Entries 1200 poles and also from said Beginning south 20 west with Netherlands line to the line of an Entry made in the name of James Lyle Jr for 500 acres, thence South 70 East to the corner of said Entry, then and also from the Termination of the line of 1200 poles East for quantity. Decr 19th 1783.

ENTRY OF FORTY-NINE HUNDRED AND
TWENTY-TWO ACRES OF LAND.

The following is a copy of the second land entry made by John Filson in the register of Col. Thomas Marshall, surveyor of Fayette County:

John Filson assee &c Enteres 4922 acres of Land on the ballance of a Treasury Warrant No 19606 lying about 5 or 6 miles from the ohio River, Beginning at the most West corner of an Entry made in the name of Humphrey Marshall for 3,000 acres and runing from, thence and with the line of Said Entry South 40 East and continuing the Same course 800 poles, thence and from the Beginning running South 50 West so far that a line runing from the Termination of one to the other and parallel to the line of 800 poles will include the quantity Decr 19th 1783.

ENTRY OF TWENTY-FOUR HUNDRED AND
FORTY-SIX ACRES OF LAND.

The following is a copy of the third land entry made by John Filson in the Register of Colonel Thomas Marshall, surveyor of Fayette County:

John Filson, assee, Enteres 2446½ acres on two Treasury Warrants one Belonging to John Boyd No. 14,934, the other assigned to John Filson No. 10,758 as tenant adjoining on the northerly side with said Boyd about 10 or 11 miles south of Ohio River, beginning at the most westerly corner of an entry of John Filson's thence by the line of said Entry of 4922 acres south 40 East and continuing the same course 625 poles, thence and from the beginning south 50 west 626 poles or so far that a line running parallel to the former will include the quantity Deer 20th 1783.

FILSON'S BOND FOR A DEED TO
HENRY.

The following is a copy of the bond for a deed made by John Filson in favor of Daniel Henry, and recorded in the Clerk's Office of Jefferson County, in Louisville, Ky.:

Know all men by these presents, that I, John Filson, of Jefferson County, and Commonwealth of Virginia, am held and firmly bound unto Daniel Henry, merchant of the same place, in the just and full sum of two thousand pounds lawful money of Virginia, to be paid unto the said Daniel Henry, his heirs, execu-

tors, administrators, or assigns, to the which payment well and truly to be made and done I bind myself, my heirs, Ex'r's and administrators firmly by these presents, sealed with my seal and dated this fourteenth day of October, one thousand seven hundred and eighty five.

The condition of the above obligation is such that if the above bounden John Filson, his heirs, executors, or administrators, or either of them do or shall well and truly make over, a good sure and indefeasable Estate of Inheritance in Fee Simple of in and to a certain tract of land, lying and being situate upon the west branch of Brandywine Creek about two miles south of the Gap road in East fallowfield Township, Chester County, and Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, containing two hundred and forty acres, free and clear off and from all and all manner of Incumbrances, and demands whatsoever, against the first day of April in the year one thousand seven hundred and eighty seven unto the above mentioned Daniel Henry, his heirs, executors, administrators or assigns together with full possession, of the aforesaid premises against the first day of April next ensuing the date hereof and that without any Let hindrance, Interruption or Disturbance of the aforesaid John Filson, his heirs or assigns or any other person or persons whatsoever, then the above obligation to be void and of none effect, otherwise remain in full force and virtue in law.

JOHN FILSON. [SEAL.]

Signed, sealed, and delivered in the presence of

DAVID MORGAN,
BENJAMIN FARICKSON,
DANIEL BUCKLEY,
MARTIN CARNEY,
JOHN WILLIAMS,
JAMES MORRISON.

Jefferson Sect. November Court, 1785.

The foregoing Bond was duly acknowledged in open court and admitted to record.

Teste:

WILL JOHNSTON, Clerk.

PROPOSED SCHOOL IN LEXINGTON.

On the 19th of January, 1788, the following article, written by Filson, advocating the establishment of a seminary at Lexington, was published in the Kentucky Gazette, a weekly newspaper then printed there by John Bradford. The article led to a comical as well as a serious correspondence, as will appear by what followed:

The public has been informed that a seminary is proposed in Lexington. In consultation of the respectable inhabitants upon that subject, there appeared a proper spirit of encouragement: every gentleman present was suitably impressed with the importance of the plan, and seriously wished the accomplishment. Many valuable advantages will probably arise from this institution, as the situation will be popular and healthy, in the center of a fertile country, where accommodations for students may be had at the lowest rates. The teachers are determined to pay the strictest attention to their pupils, and hope their success will merit encouragement. With the discipline of northern teachers to suppress every species of vice and immorality, and give the greatest encouragement to the fruit and practice of virtue, party spirit will be exploded, and to instruct in the general system of Christianity only, considered as their indispensable duty.

The ideas of mankind with respect to the seats of education are various, some prefer a town or city, others the country; the latter, viewing the many temptations youths are exposed to in towns, and supposing they are fewer in the country, think that the most eligible: however probable this may appear, yet experience proves that a being, determined on folly, will find as many oppor-

tunities in the country, as in town, with the addition of a greater secrecy in accomplishing his designs: many mean and vicious practices can be effected, which in a public situation the unavoidable idea of detection would effectually prevent; this obvious from a view of a country student walking out of school, he carelessly hulks his body along in clownish gestures, pays no respect to a genteel movement, from a consciousness that no eye beholds him, fears not the contempt or ridicule which must be consequent upon such a conduct in a respectable town, or if in a public situation indecorum should pass unnoticed by all, but the teachers, then is the most pertinent season for admonitions, when the culprit must be sensible upon the smallest observation of the ruinous consequences to all character and future reputation, which he must unavoidably sustain. I conceive the voice of thunder could not make more serious impressions. Experience beyond doubt will confirm these observations.

The advantage of knowing mankind also, which those in a recluse situation can not, and after a series of time, except their studies, are mere infants, and frequently upon their first approach into public life, by awkwardness, blast all their future fame; the contrary is evident with the young gentleman educated in public life, by frequently viewing the deformity of vice, he naturally abhors it, especially where it is treated with contempt; with the knowledge of science he becomes acquainted with human nature, has a proper idea of the world, and by the time his studies are accomplished is the gentleman as well as the scholar.

This investigation may extend to every country, at present it is designed for Kentucky, in which it is sufficient to say Lexington is not the least in account for this situation.

The tuition will be five pounds per annum, one half cash the other property, good boarding, washing and lodging may be had about one mile from town for twenty or thirty at nine pounds per year, and that in property, and in case of providing a bed the boarding will be eight pounds for each one. Those who wish to secure lodgings will apply to Mr. Barr and Mr. Coburn in Lexington for information.

The education will commence some time in April, and the French language will be taught, with all the arts and sciences used in academies. In the beginning of April all students will apply for entrance, as I shall be constantly in Lexington from that time. I am, with respect, the public's obedient humble servant.

JOHN FILSON.

AGRICOLA'S REPLY TO FILSON.

On the 8th of March, 1788, the following sarcastic and unexpected reply to Filson's article on the proposed seminary appeared in the Kentucky Gazette:

TO MR. FILSON:

SIR: As I am a citizen of Kentucky and have a number of children to educate, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to see schools rising so thick in various parts of the district. How happy for this infant country that we have so many gentlemen of learning and abilities, who are ready to take our youth by the hand and lead them through the whole circle of arts and sciences, at so moderate an expense. Only a few months ago I was puzzled to find a proper school for my sons: now the scene is changed, and I seem equally embarrassed to know which seminary to prefer.

At one time I had concluded to suffer my boys to drink at the Royal Springs, and try the efficacy of that wondrous font; but, being a very staunch whig, I hate even the name of royal, though applied to the waters of Parnassus. I then turned my attention to Lexington school, and was about putting my sons under the tuition of the former professor of Philadelphia college, but before this could be accomplished an ingenious production from some of the promising youths of Jessamine seemed to press me to send them to that celebrated seat of the Muses.

However, Sir, upon a careful revisal of your late production and seriously weighing the matter in my own mind, I have at length come to a fixed resolution to keep my boys at home until your academy is opened. For of all plans of education hitherto offered to the public yours certainly bears the palm, and promises the most extensive utility. Your design is great and important. To unite the scholar, the gentleman and the Christian all in one, is the supreme, the ultimate end of science. Indeed a design like this will stamp divinity on your institution, success to philosophy, and raise humanity to a consummation which every good man must devoutly wish. And in this view of it, I have the pleasure to inform you that all my acquaintances are charmed, are delighted with the institution, and determined to give it every encouragement. And, as we feel so deeply interested in this institution, we wish to know more of it, and fully to understand every syllable that has dropped from your learned pen concerning it.

But, here, Sir, we labor under an unhappy disadvantage. In my neighborhood all are illiterate, and unaccustomed to high, flowery language or abstruse reasoning. Your sentiments are, many of them, so new, your style is so lofty, your periods are so lengthy and crowded with such a variety of matter, your conclusions are often so remote from their premises, and relatives quite out of sight of their antecedents, that we are totally left in the maze, and the longest line of our understandings are not able to fathom the depth of such erudition. I have therefore, by the desire of my neighbors, flung those parts of your advertisement that we could not understand into a few questions. As

1. What is meant by the word popular, as applied to the situation of your intended academy?
2. Is it necessary that your scholars should travel a mile every day, in all weather, in order to find boarding at eight or nine pounds a year?
3. Are youth who receive their education in populous cities generally more virtuous than such as have a private education?
4. What peculiar charms have northern teachers to inspire virtue, suppress vice, and explode all party spirit, that southern teachers do not possess?

5. What is the meaning of the verb hulk?

6. Are young ladies, educated in the country, guilty of the sin—of hulking?

This question comes from the fair sex themselves, who have taken the alarm. They fully believe that the crime of hulking, which you have so indiscriminately charged upon their brothers, is a rude stroke of satire, indirectly aimed at them. Take heed, good Sir; 'tis death to provoke the Fair.

Lastly, for the benefit of such as can not give their children a public education, he pleased to point out that peculiar moment, that particular nick of time when admonition, like a thunderbolt, shall knock a hulking boy out of his "awkward gestures" into a "genteel movement."

By giving a plain, easy solution to these questions, you will, sir, much oblige many of your well-wishers, and, with the rest, your most obedient and humble servant,

AGRICOLA.

FILSON'S REJOINDER TO AGRICOLA.

On the 19th of April, 1788, the following rejoinder of Filson to Agricola was published in the Kentucky Gazette:

TO AGRICOLA:

You have taken the liberty to animadvert upon the publication of the intended Seminary, proposing a few silly and impertinent questions, which I shall take no notice of. Your officious performance Reflects no reputation, indicating a Spirit of altercation, which in every attitude I view with contempt. As you have been so personal with me, you will please to leave your name with the Printer, and oblige

JOHN FILSON.

AGRICOLA'S SURREJOINDER TO FILSON.

On the 17th of May, 1788, the following surrejoinder of Agricola to Filson appeared in the Kentucky Gazette, and closed the correspondence so far as is known, as nothing further appeared in the paper:

TO MR. FILSON, SIR:

You have taken the liberty to animadvert upon the (viz. my) publication of the intended seminary, proposing a silly and impertinent question, which I shall take no notice of. Your officious performance reflects no reputation, indicating a spirit of altercation, which in every attitude I view with contempt.

AGRICOLA.

EXTRACT FROM THE ANSWER OF KIDD
AND WILLIAMS.

In March, 1811, Jacob Burnet, as attorney for the heirs at law of Israel Ludlow, filed in the Court of Common Pleas, in Cincinnati, a petition against John Kidd and Joel Williams for the recovery of Lot No. 401. The petition ignored John Filson as one of the founders of Cincinnati, and also ignored Losantiville as being the predecessor of Cincinnati; and began Cincinnati with its own name as laid out by Israel Ludlow. On the 25th

of July, 1811, E. Glover, as attorney for John Kidd and Joel Williams, filed an answer in which Filson was put forth as the original layer-out of the town of Losantiville, and Losantiville as the predecessor of Cincinnati. From this answer of Kidd and Williams the following extracts are taken concerning Filson:

On the 25th day of August, 1788, he, the said Matthias Denman, entered into a contract in writing under his hand and seal with the said Robert Patterson named in the complainant's bill and one John Filson, then of Lexington, Fayette County, and State of Kentucky, but who is since deceased, whereby the said Matthias did grant, bargain, and sell the full two thirds part of said six hundred and forty acres to be located by virtue of the aforesaid warrant by an equal undivided right in partnership to the said Robert Patterson and John Filson, their heirs and assigns, and the said Matthias, Robert, and John did, by said agreement, covenant with each other that every other institution, determination, and regulation respecting the laying off of a town and establishing a ferry at and upon the premises should be the result of the united advice and consent of the parties in covenant as aforesaid. By virtue of which said contract the said John Filson became entitled to an equal undivided third part of all the right and title of him the said Matthias, the said Robert to one other third part thereof, and the remaining third part was retained by the said Matthias as a tenant in common with the said John and Robert. . . . And these defendants further state that they are informed and believe that after the aforesaid contract had been made between the said Denman, Patterson, and Filson, they agreed to lay out a town upon the premises, and on or about the 22d day of September, in the year 1788, they, the said Denman, Patterson, and Filson, landed on the ground where Cincinnati now stands, and on the following day commenced surveying some of the lines and streets of said town and then and there agreed upon the site thereof as the same has since been laid out, to which they then gave the name of Losantiville. . . .

And these defendants further state that sometime in or about the month of October, in the year 1788, the said John Filson was killed by the Indians in defense of the Miami country. And they further aver that the said John Filson did not at any time prior to his death sell or in any manner dispose of his right purchased from the said Matthias as aforesaid, or any part thereof, either to the said Israel Ludlow or any other person, but that he died possessed of all the right he had acquired by virtue of the aforesaid contract with the said Matthias whereupon all the right and title of the said John Filson descended and became vested in his heirs at law who, as these defendants are informed and believe, reside in some of the Eastern States. And these defendants further state that shortly after the death of the said John Filson the said Matthias Denman, Robert Patterson, and Israel Ludlow entered into a combination, as these defendants are informed and believe, to defraud the heirs of the said John Filson of the right he had acquired in his lifetime by virtue of the before mentioned contract with the said Matthias. And for the purpose of effecting and concealing their unjust and fraudulent designs, after having ransacked his trunks and destroyed such of his papers as they could find, they agreed with each other that the said Israel should appear to the world and act as proprietor of all that part of the said premises which belonged to said John at the time of his death; and that he should proceed in all respects in the same manner as if the said Israel had in fact been the purchaser from the said Denman in the place and stead of the said John. And in pursuance of said unjust, wicked and fraudulent combination, the said Israel did usurp the right which belonged to the said John Filson at the time of his death, and did act as proprietor of one third part of the said premises, and they and each of them did conceal and deny the right of the said John Filson and did hold out the said Israel as an equal proprietor with the said Matthias and Robert, whereas in truth the said Israel had no right or title in the premises, but the same belonged to the said Filson at the time of his death as herein before stated.

EXTRACT FROM PATTERSON'S DEPOSITION.

In the case of Ludlow's heirs against Kidd & Williams, Robert Patterson, one of the original proprietors and partners of Filson, gave his deposition January 6, 1814, from which the following extract is taken concerning Filson:

Matthias Denman purchased of John C Symmes a section and fraction opposite the mouth of Licking, containing somewhere about 710 acres, and admitted this deponent and one Filson as partners in said purchase; that they agreed to lay out a town on said tract shortly afterwards, and before the town was laid off Filson was killed by the Indians; that he never had advanced or paid any money for his proportion of said tract either to Symmes or Denman, and after his death Israel Ludlow was by the consent of the other proprietors admitted an equal partner in said purchase.

VENABLE'S BALLAD ON FILSON.

The following ballad was written by W. H. Venable, principal of the Chickering Institute at Cincinnati, and appeared in his book, entitled "June on the Miami, and other Poems," published at Cincinnati in 1877:

JOHN FILSON.

John Filson was a pedagogue,
A pioneer was he;
I know not what his nation was,
Nor what his pedigree.

Tradition's scanty records tell
But little of the man,
Save that he to the frontier came
In immigration's van.

Perhaps with phantoms of reform
His busy fancy teemed;
Perhaps of new Utopias
Hesperian he dreamed.

John Filson and companions bold
A frontier village planned,
In forest wild, on sloping hills,
By fair Ohio's strand.

John Filson from three languages
With pedant skill did frame
The novel word Losantiville
To be the new town's name.

Said Filson, "Comrades, hear my words—
Ere threescore years have flown
Our town will be a city vast."
Loud laughed Bob Patterson.

Still John exclaimed, with prophet tongue,
"A city fair and proud,
The Queen of Cities in the West!"
Mat. Denman laughed aloud.

Deep in the wild and solemn woods,
Unknown to white man's track,
John Filson went one autumn day,
But never more came back.

He struggled through the solitude
The inland to explore,
And with romantic pleasure trac'd
Miami's winding shore.

Across his path the startled deer
Bounds to its shelter green,
He enters every lonely vale
And cavernous ravine.

Too soon the murky twilight comes,
The night wind 'gins to moan;
Bewildered wanders Filson, lost,
Exhausted, and alone.

By lurking foes his steps are dogged;
A yell his ear appalls!
A ghastly corpse upon the ground,
A murdered man he falls.

The Indian, with instinctive hate,
In him a herald saw
Of coming hosts of pioneers,
The friends of light and law;

In him beheld the champion
Of industries and arts,
The founder of encroaching roads
And great commercial marts;

The spoiler of the hunting-ground,
The plower of the sod,
The builder of the Christian school
And of the house of God.

And so the vengeful tomahawk
John Filson's blood did spill—
The spirit of the pedagogue
No tomahawk could kill.

John Filson had no sepulcher,
Except the wild wood dim;
The mournful voices of the air
Made requiem for him.

The druid trees their waving arms
Uplifted o'er his head;
The moon a pallid vail of light
Upon his visage spread.

The rain and sun of many years
Have worn his bones away,
And what he vaguely prophesied
We realize to-day.

Losantiville, the prophet's word,
The poet's hope, fulfills—
She sits a stately Queen to-day
Amid her royal hills.

Then come, ye pedagogues, and join
To sing a graceful lay
For him the martyr pioneer
Who led for you the way.

And may my simple ballad be
A monument to save
His name from blank oblivion
Who never had a grave.

THE FIRST LOT-OWNERS IN CINCINNATI.

The interval was so long between the initial steps of Filson in laying out Cincinnati, under the name of Losantiville, in September, 1788, and the first distribution of lots under Ludlow, in January, 1789, that the friends of Filson, who expected to become settlers under his plan, may not have acquired lots. And yet there are good reasons for believing that the lots acquired by the first owners in the city of Cincinnati differed but little, if any, from those that Filson had marked out in his original plan of Losantiville. Even Judge Burnet, who insisted on having Filson dead before a chain was stretched upon the site of Losantiville, and always spoke of the forfeiture of his interest in that town on account of his death and the non-payment of the purchase-money as a matter of course, without the least regard to the conditions of his written contract, gave good testimony through another witness as to the similarity between Filson's plan of Losantiville and Ludlow's plan of Cincinnati—the main difference consisting in Filson's plan giving more ground for public use than Ludlow's gave. Here is what the judge said in his letter of October 5, 1844, published in Cist's Cincinnati Miscellany:

I was informed by Judge Turner, one of the earliest adventurers to the West, that he had seen both plats, and that the general outline and plan of division were nearly the same in both, but that the first or Filson plat, to which the name of Losantiville was to have been given, set aside two entire blocks for the use of the town, and that it gave as a public common all the ground between front street and the river extending from Eastern Row to Western Row, then the extreme boundaries of the town plat; and it is impressed upon my mind, though I can not say what caused that impression, that on the first or Filson plat Front Street was laid down nearer to the river or made more southing in its course westward than we find it on the plat of Cincinnati. I was also informed that some of the names which had been selected for streets of the Losantiville plan were given to streets on the plan of Cincinnati, and that others were rejected.

The presumption can not be regarded as violent, therefore, that the first owners of lots in the great city of Cincinnati acquired them as they had been originally laid out by Filson in his plan of Losantiville. Believing that such was the fact, and that the pledge of Filson, in the prospectus of August 30, 1788, to give thirty half-acre lots and thirty four-acre lots to the first settlers was thus redeemed, I subjoin a list of the in-lots and the out-lots acquired on the 7th of January, 1789, with the names of the owners:

THE OUT-LOTS OF FOUR ACRES EACH.

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| No. 1, James Carpenter, | No. 4, Ephraim Kibby, |
| 2, John Porter, | 5, James McConnell, |
| 3, Joel Williams, | 6, David McClure, |

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| No. 7, Harry Lindsay, | No. 19, — Davison, |
| 8, Matthew Cammel, | 20, Isaac Freeman, |
| 9, Scott Traverse, | 21, James Cammel, |
| 10, Jonas Menfer, | 22, Noah Badgley, |
| 11, James Dument, | 23, Jesse Fulton, |
| 12, Archibald Stewart, | 24, John Vance, |
| 13, Luther Kitchel, | 25, Benjamin Dument, |
| 14, Samuel Mooney, | 26, Elijah Martin, |
| 15, Sylvester White, | 27, Daniel Shoemaker, |
| 16, Henry Buchtel, | 28, Joseph Thornton, |
| 17, Thomas Gizzel, | 29, Samuel Blackburn, |
| 18, Isaac Vanmeter, | 30, Jesse Stewart, |
| 31, William McMillan. | |

THE IN-LOTS OF HALF AN ACRE EACH.

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| No. 1, Samuel Blackburn, | No. 26, Joshua McClure, |
| 2, Sylvester White, | 27, — Davison, |
| 3, Robert Caldwell, | 28, Nathaniel Rolstein, |
| 4, John Vance, | 29, Jonas Menfer, |
| 5, James Dument, | 30, James McConnell, |
| 6, Jesse Fulton, | 31, Noah Badgley, |
| 7, Elijah Martin, | 32, James Carpenter, |
| 8, Isaac Vanmeter, | 33, Samuel Mooney, |
| 9, Thomas Gizzel, | 34, James Cammel, |

No. 51, Isaac Freeman,	No. 57, Archibald Stewart,
52, Scott Traverse,	58, Luther Kitchel,
53, Enoch McHenry,	59, Ephraim Kibby,
54, Jesse Stewart,	76, Harry Lindsay,
56, Henry Bechtel,	77, John Porter,
79, {	{ Daniel Shoemaker,
	{ Joel Williams.

DEPOSITION OF COL. PATTERSON.

It was my purpose to insert in this appendix the deposition given by Col. Robert Patterson, in December, 1803, in the suit brought by the city of Cincinnati against Joel Williams for the recovery of the old Losantiville common. This deposition, however, could not be found among the records, in their confused state, as rescued from the late fire which destroyed the Cincinnati court-house, and it is possible that the original perished in the flames. The view I have presented of what passed between Col. Patterson and a brother of John Filson concerning the Filson interest in the Losantiville lands is based upon notes made from this deposition years ago. I may add, however, that a comparison of my notes with some made from the same deposition by Mr. John D. Caldwell, of Cincinnati, a very accurate collector, shows perfect agreement in every important particular.

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